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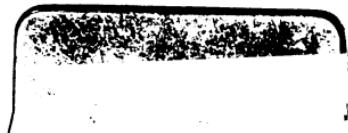
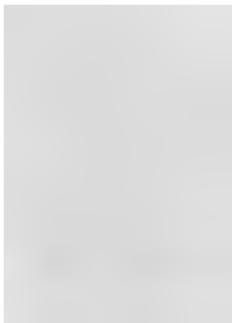
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THE THREE WHISPERS

AND

Other Tales.



THE
THREE WHISPERS
AND
Other Tales.

REPRINTED

FROM THE "UNIVERSITY" AND "SUNDAY SCHOOL" MAGAZINES.

BY

THE REV. S. G. COTTON,

Rector and Vicar of Caragh,

Author of "The Acquittance in Full," "Ellen Dalton,"
"The Debt Paid," &c.



The profits of this work to go to Caragh Orphanage, Co. Kildare.

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1870.

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DEDICATION.

MY DEAR AUNT ELLEN,

Some of the following Tales were written under your roof and that of your excellent husband; and as I feel that I owe much of my mental strength to the healthy teaching and example I received and saw there, I but recognise a debt of gratitude in dedicating this little volume to you.

With earnest prayers that you may have "the peace which passeth all understanding," while God leaves you here, and afterwards a happy rest through Christ in "our Father's house," there to meet loved ones gone before,

I remain,

My dear Aunt,

Always affectionately yours,

S. G. COTTON.

CAROGH GLEBE-HOUSE,
December, 1870.



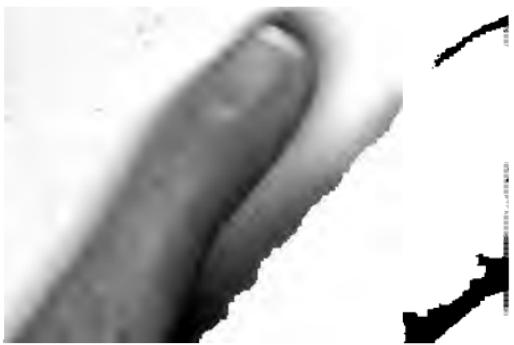
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P R E F A C E.

HAVING written for so many years anonymously, some explanation is perhaps required why I should now cast aside the mystic cloak and appear in person; and the present position of our dear Church affords, I conceive, a sufficient reason for "coming to the front."

No doubt much good might be done by the secret pen, and words of fire have issued from those without name, stirring many hearts. But it seems to me that the soldier of Christ should especially labour to magnify His Leader's name and advance His cause: to "provoke all to love and good works," that "they may walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they are called," and "adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour in all things."

Now, in this dark time of peril and danger, "men of our own selves teaching perverse things," it

behoves all true followers of the "Captain of our salvation" to avow themselves such, boldly and openly, "shoulder to shoulder," with their brethren, to combat error, strike for the sacred cause of truth, and "be more than conquerors through Him who loved us and gave Himself for us."

From this point of view every sentinel ought to be known and seen, not for individual glory, but that weak hearts may take courage when they see how many there are to man the watch-towers.

In building up our future free Church, I do not think there is any means so likely to be useful as teaching the young children—gathering in the orphans—rescuing the "waifs and strays" of poverty and vice—recruiting the rank and file of Protestantism.

Vain will be a sustentation fund—as nothing, the oblations of the rich, if our Protestant farmers, our Protestant servants, and our Protestant peasantry be not encouraged, where practicable, by patronage and employment, their children being taught and cared for.

The "silver and gold" are the Lord's, but of far more value are the souls of His people; and the foundation-stones of the noble structure we are about to raise, must be, not rich endowments nor wealthy offerings, but the fidelity and faith of God's children; other things needful will follow.

As I regard the care and culture of the rising generation of Protestants one of the most important branches of the building up of the future Irish Church, I propose to give the profits of this work to the little Orphanage at Carogh, which my dear wife and other Christian friends have been permitted to establish ; and I only wish there was an orphan home in every parish throughout Ireland.

The chief incidents of the accompanying tales are founded on fact.

The "Three Whispers" was selected for insertion in the *Dublin University Magazine*, but not liking some of the details, I withdrew it, made some alterations, and it now appears for the first time. The poisoning scene of the opening chapter, although sensational, has had its unfortunate parallel in real life ; neither is the case of the returned convict without its original.

"Grace Kennedy" was published in the *Dublin University Magazine* some years ago ; the localities and individuals are, in many instances, depicted from the life, and will, doubtless, be recognized by those acquainted with the counties Kildare, King's County, or Westmeath.

The scene of "The Foundling" is also laid in the same locality, and the adventures of the little fellow are not altogether fiction.

The idea of "Ellen Seaton" was suggested by an

English clergyman and his wife joining the Church of Rome, which communion he subsequently left, but was unable to discover his wife, who had become a nun—all this I read in the newspapers at the time; but when in England, I heard, from undoubted authority, a much more touching narrative of another case, which had not found its way into the public prints.

Having been for twenty-three years engaged in managing schools and teaching, I venture to think that I am not altogether ignorant of the “ways,” thought, and expression of the young folk with whom I have had so much to do, and trust that this offering will not be unacceptable either to the present race of juveniles, or to those who have left childhood behind, and gone out into the bustling world; and while they are safe on shore, I pray them to help me in manning the life-boat with which I seek to rescue the shipwrecked outcast, the foundling, and the Roman Catholic, from ruin and superstition; and I ask this in our Master’s name.

S. G. C.

THE THREE WHISPERS.

CHAPTER I.

Twas Christmas time in Dublin. The schools were all closed, and the little boys home for vacation; and crowds of laughing, happy faces thronged the streets: some in carriages drove here and there as fancy led them, and laid in stores of cakes, or toys, or books; others, more humble, were on the flagway, and better off, too, than their richer neighbours, for they could stop and view all the lovely things in the windows, and feast their eyes with wonderful plays and beautiful pictures; while others, more lowly still, who had no money, would wander with their parents, also taking holiday, and enjoy the crowded streets and the handsome equipages as much as if they possessed all that the others bought, having the sweet and truest source of joy—contentment. It was Saturday, four days before Christmas. The lamps were just lighted, and the streets were insensibly becoming less full. The various traps for purchasers were being removed from the doors; and the different owners began to think—some of tea, and some of a more substantial meal. A young man, pale and careworn, hurried along one of the most frequented streets;

THE THREE WHISPERS

quickly he listened on as if he would pass by the busy crowd unseen: now hurrying outside in the curb-stone, as he met some one, or wished to run past another pedestrian going slower than himself: and now slipping inside by the shop-windows, but never passing those he met or left behind. He stops at a doorway, pauses for a moment, and enters there. It is a newspaper office. "Any letters for A. S.?" he asks in trembling tones.

"No," replied the clerk examining the box. The applicant raised upwards a despairing eye, and left the house.

His step was slower now, the disappointment sat heavily on him: and yet to judge from his threadbare suit and small body-round burthened closely to his neck, the world seemed to have frowned on him, and taught him hopelessness.

Gradually his step again quickened: two streets were passed, and in a third he arrives at a book-shop into which he went.

"Is Mr. Taylor in?" he inquired of the young man behind the counter.

"He is at his tea," was the short reply. "I'll answer, I dare say."

"Oh! no, I want very much to see himself," urged the young man in a despairing sort of tone; "very particularly indeed."

The lad appeared doubtful, but at last put his mouth to the call-tube, and spoke. A fat elderly man, with bald head, appeared. "Well, what's the matter?" he demanded, coming over to his visitor, and peering in his face.

"The manuscript I left, sir, will it suit?"

"Oh! pooh, no sir, it wouldn't answer at all; you want style, sir. John, what on earth made you disturb me? Give this man a manuscript marked T." The stranger did

not wait for it ; "God help me," he cried, and rushed into the dark street again. On, on, he sped ; despair seemed to urge him now. Once at a lonely corner he paused, and looking up to heaven, raised his hands and said—O God ! thou hast tried me to the uttermost ; I can bear no more ;" and on he sped again—on, on, through the narrow and deserted streets.

Ha ! there are the tall masts now ; he is on a quay, and the black, dark, floating mass of waters lie shining below him. He looks down on it intently ; he stands on the very brink—another step—thousands in the lofty houses round him have enough and to spare, while he perishes with hunger—thousands midst kind friends and smiling faces, in luxury or comfort, enjoy their Christmas times, while one poor erring soul totters on the brink of the black, black eternal pit for ever.

A gasping sob—"Kate, loved wife, farewell ; the little thing is gone before this. World, heartless world, I leave thee ; and pain and hunger, heartaches and anguish cease. God have mercy on me now." He looks up to heaven, where God's little stars were twinkling, and the great majesty of the Almighty in the vast expanse above and round the world and its cares, addressed him. Still on the bank he stood. Was it God's own powerful hand that held him there ! and was it God's own mighty voice that whispered in his heart—"Put thy trust in the Lord, and be doing good ; dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed !" He turned away ; back through the streets again he slowly wends his way. "They must have food, though," he said suddenly, and passed on : down lanes, and alleys, crooked turnings, and now and then across a large thoroughfare. It is at a corner shop he stops now : the flagway and the double entrance was in that filthy, half-wet state caused by the track of many dirty feet. Some discontented, going

out, others with bundles entering. He waited for a minute till he saw a partition vacant at the counter within; then hastening to it he pulled off his coat, and laid it with his hat before the clerk.

This latter eyed his tattered shirt, hanging on his breast and arms, and a feeling of compassion seemed for a moment to gleam in his face, as the sunken eye above the famished cheek met his; but he said nothing, he bethought himself of his stern calling—he was a broker in other people's wretchedness—he had to live, and his heart grew hard again.

"What do you want for them?" he asked.

"They ought to be worth ten shillings," was the doubtful answer.

"Ten shillings, indeed! why this hat's not worth sixpence; and as for the coat," he went on, giving it a professional twist, "I couldn't allow more than three shillings on it—come, I'll give three shillings and sixpence on the two articles."

"The coat cost two pounds and the hat ten shillings, I assure you," was urged in supplicating tones.

"Don't doubt it at all; but they're not worth that now, you know. Come, I don't care, I'll make it four shillings; there." Wonderful! wonderful! a pawnbroker sees his victim wants money, and gives him sixpence more than he at first said.

"I suppose I must take it," replied the stranger with a sigh; and he received the money.

A woman behind him, waiting for his place, heard the colloquy.

"Arrah, man dear," she exclaimed, with a rich Hibernian accent, as he turned round to depart, "is it without your coat you're goin'? Bedad, that's a bad thing on a cowld evenin' like this. I've an ould jacket here that I'm

goin' to dhrop, an' I don't suppose I'll get more than six-pence on it—an' so you may have it for that. It's fitther to be on you that wants it, than lyin' in the shop. Here, thry it on ; it's a little small, but sure it's betther than nothin' ! I'm Mary Murphy, 10 Golden-lane, and you can bring it back to me when you get your own coat." He handed her sixpence almost mechanically ; muttered a word of thanks, and hurried away.

At a provision shop he pauses next ; and buys a loaf, tea, sugar, and a candle ; then on again. A couple more turns, and he was at home ; an old dirty house ; the street door left partly open for the lodgers on the different floors ; up to the top he goes ; then, on the uppermost landing, pauses to listen. He gently pushes in the door on his right, and enters. It is dark and cold within.

"Who is that ?" a female voice inquires, in feeble accents.

"Tis I, Kate darling—Edward."

"Oh ! thank God, you are come ; but don't make a noise ; Lilla is asleep."

"Give me a match, I've a candle here."

It was lighted ; and the misery of the wretched room and its occupants was revealed ; a dirty low bed, two old chairs, a table, and a box, with one small strip of carpet, was all the furnishing ; a little child lay on the bed : was it asleep, unconscious of the ills around it, and in its dreams picturing happiness and brighter scenes—or was it at rest, to last until the trump should summon the great world to judgment ?

"Blow up the fire, Kate, and get water in the little kettle, I'll go out for milk and butter and some coal : kindle those little sticks—I'll not be long." And he went out again—he soon returned ; and a fire quickly blazed, and the kettle shortly sang its note for tea-making, and

now a sort of cloth was laid on the deal table, and some cups placed on it.

"Now, Kate, get Lilla up," said her husband.

She gently shook the child, without effect; and now a stronger push—"Lilla, Lilla, awake. Here is some nice tea papa has brought you;" another shake—"Edward, Edward, she won't awake!"

And the father, too, approached the bed; he stooped down over the little body, and a dreadful truth flashed on him. "Lilla," he said, "here's papa;" but no dear little voice gave answer; no darling little eye opened to welcome his; he took her in his arms; the head hung down; she awoke not; he laid her back; he put his lips to hers, and placed his hand upon her little breast—there was no breath or warm touch, no heart now beat in the house of clay—the infant spirit had been called from earth—the dust alone remained.

He turned and caught his wife, drew her nearer to him and kissed her tenderly, while a bursting sob came rushing from his heart.

"Kate," he said, "she has goes from us, the Lord has taken her; He gave; He has also taken away; blessed be His name."

"Oh! Edward, Edward, no. Oh! no, no, no. She can't be dead;" and the mother knelt beside the child—"but now she spoke to me—just before you came, not an hour ago. She complained of hunger, and said she would go asleep. O God, she can't be dead;" and in agony she tried to open her eyes, and felt her face and hands, now gettting cold in death. It was too true, their little one was dead; and the mother lying down beside the child, kissed its lips and clasped the tiny waist, calling its loved name, and now giving way to paroxysms of bitter grief. The father, too, could not control himself. He gazed on

the food prepared, then on the bed, and sitting down, covered his face with his hands, and sobbed convulsively.

The poor young couple, well educated, refined in feeling—not stained with any crime; anxious to work and learn; not in a desert place, where there were no human beings but themselves; but in a large and crowded city, full of wealth and luxury, they starved. The poor young parents, who amid their toil and daily care, had a bright, happy glance before them always, to cheer and make them laugh; the joyous thoughtlessness of childhood, not knowing future cares, which shed a lustre round their drear abode, and made at least the present moment blithesome; the little blue-eyed thing, with promise of sweet beauty and bright intellect, which bid them hide their bitter thoughts from day to day, told them to live and hope. She was gone from them; dying, too, oh! dreadful thought, from want; she had been starved to death; another bitter lesson taught them by their hard taskmasters—grief and penury.

The man first recovers himself. After his excessive grief had ceased, he sat for some time in silence, with his face buried in his hands; his poor wife lay moaning on the bed still; he rose and went to her.

"Kate, love," he said, laying his hand on her shoulder, "get up, take some tea, you can do no good to her now, and you sadly want food; get up, darling."

"No, no; leave me here to die with my child. I have killed her," and she clasped the body closer to her."

"Kate, precious love, own, own wife, don't talk so," and he leaned fondly over her. "The Almighty has thus willed it: did not you often give up all your food to her? have not I seen it? will you forget me to grieve for her? was not I as fond of her as you? Get up, own heart's treasure," and he lifted her off the floor, and brought her

to a chair. He poured out tea, and cut bread and butter. She looked up in his face gratefully, and ate in silence; likewise did he. They feared to trust their voices, lest there should be a breaking forth of grief again; by degrees they were more composed.

She noticed the old baragon jacket he had on, so short in the sleeves and waist.

“Dear husband, where is your own coat?”

He told her, as well as of the poor Irishwoman’s kindness.

“The good creature! But to think of one like her offering us charity—oh! Edward!” and the tears rose again to her eyes.

“I was at the *Times*’ office,” he said to divert her thoughts, but sorry that he had done so, when it was spoken.

“Well?” she asked.

“No answer,” he replied; “but, perhaps, on Monday.”

“Oh! no, there is no chance. A whole week over, and nothing; ‘tis hopleless now. Were you at the bookshop?”

“Yes; but Mr. Taylor was at tea, and kept the manuscript still,” he replied evasively.

“Oh! dear; oh! dear; and what did you get for the coat!”

“Only four shillings; then I gave sixpence for this jacket and spent eighteenpence; so have two shillings left,” he replied, trying to cheer her.

“Two shillings! O merciful God! and how are we to bury her?” and she glanced at the bed, “I would rather lie down and die with her than apply to the parish.”

“I had not thought of that,” cried her husband, starting up. “Oh! no, I will never ask for charity,” and he paced up and down the room.

The cheap candle was getting low, and reminded them of

going to rest. He stopped and looked at her, and then at the dead child—she followed his glance.

“Shall I lay it in the corner for the night?” he asked inquiringly.

“Dear Edward, no. I could not bear it on the hard floor, the poor little darling; let her stay in the bed while with us; there will be as much room for her now as last night.”

And they went to bed, the father and mother with the dead child.

The morning came, Sunday morning, when so many lay long to take rest after a hard week's work, and rise to thank the Almighty in His house of prayer for all His mercies; when so many wake with happy, peaceful minds, free from bitter cares and harrowing thoughts; and as the recollection of God's day came with their consciousness, prepared themselves with all their hearts to keep it holy. But these two in this lonely garret woke to misery and grief; the Deity, in truth, was in their thoughts, but bitter pangs of sorrow weighed so heavily that they could not turn to Him as they knew they should do; a wish they felt to serve Him, but world's weakness kept them back, and hindered them from throwing their burden altogether on the Lord. The bright gleams of a December sun shone into their room, the bells of the neighbouring churches tolled for morning prayer; they slept long after their hearty meal the night before, more especially as it was their habit thus to shorten the day, and so the time of hunger.

The husband had arisen gently, kindled the fire and prepared their meal; the poor mother, still half-slumbering, said, “Lilla, pet, awake!” But the sad loss burst upon her when she roused herself, and she clasped her cold little bedfellow, to hug and sob over it as she had done the night before.

"Kate, darling, don't give way so; you will make yourself more ill; get up and eat something."

"Oh! no, no, Edward, let me lie here; all hope is gone—nothing more to pledge—let me die, too, and be buried by the parish with her; I shall not feel the shame—come, husband, lie down again, and go asleep and pray for death—the Almighty will at least grant us that; every thing in this world He has taken from us—all means to live, all hope of getting any—we must die! Oh! no, no, I have not strength to rise. Why should you ask me to live? what have you to give me? Come, die with me."

Her husband paced the room excitedly.

"Kate, Kate, what do you urge? Oh! it is fearful! We have no right to take the life that God Almighty gave. This His Sabbath, too. Last night, Kate, I stood beside the dark river; I was on the point of plunging in. Something mysterious, some movement in myself, yet not of myself, withheld me; and, Kate, at the same moment our child's spirit had left its home. Oh! Kate, we dare not die."

"And what else is left for us?" she hoarsely said, leaning upon the bed. "Have you not tried and tried—and now you have no appearance to try again. And our child; will you go and beg for food and a coffin to lay her little body in the grave; and then amongst the crowd of paupers at the poor-house, be for ever after dependent on the charity of paid officials? Oh! Edward, Edward, it is horrible. No, no, let me die now with my child. I knew you were not selfish; you waited to die with me. 'Twas that held you back last night."

"Kate, Kate, you speak horribly; get up and eat, we have it now, at least."

"No, no, I will not, I cannot eat; I do not feel hunger," and she turned her face from him.

He sat down and ate ; he brought her some tea ; she would not take it. She lay in a half stupor on the bed, moaning from time to time, one arm thrown over her dead child. He now and then spoke to her ; she answered not, or muttered, "Let me die ; let me die." And so the day wore on ; and the crowds returned home from church ; and the bells pealed a second time ; and the twilight came, and now 'twas dark again, then wrapping a shawl about his head, the husband went forth.

He stopped at the same provision shop he had visited the night before. The door was half open, even though Sunday—he could buy. He laid out a shilling in much the same way as the preceding evening—purchased a candle, fuel, and milk ; then went to an apothecary's shop a few doors on.

"Mrs. Barneswell sent me for a shilling's worth of laudanum," he said to the young man behind the counter.

"Did she send a bottle ?"

"No, but you can stop it out of the shilling."

The shopman looked suspiciously at the messenger, but handed him a phial with the dark-coloured liquid required.

The husband re-entered the garret. He appeared calmer than before. He went more quietly to work, as if a weight was off his mind. He blew up the fire, boiled the kettle, and made tea.

"Kate," he said, leaning over the bed, "get up, love."

"Oh ! no, no," she murmured, "let me lie here."

"Kate, darling," he went on, kneeling down beside her, "we will die together as you said ; in each other's arms we'll go asleep and die. I have a drink which, if we take, we'll sleep and never awake again. Will you drink this ?"

"Oh ! Edward, that is it ; I thought of that. Laudanum, yes ; you have got some ; and now a prayer to Almighty God, and be with my child again." And she got up.

“Where is it?”

“We had better take it in tea, my own wife, and then commit our souls to God, who has so willed that we should perish. We but go a little before. Then, then, we sleep, never to awake again. Will you do this?”

“Yes, yes, Edward, dear; give it to me.”

“Let us pray, my own pet, first.”

And the half-starved pair knelt down, and their lips moved in silent homage to the great Creator; worthless homage when they, the creatures were about to plunge into rebellion against that sovereign Almighty’s will; and yet, poor things, they prayed earnestly, and then arose.

He caught her to his heart.

“Shall we, Kate?”

“Yes, yes—I am impatient to sleep.”

He divided the phial into two cups of tea, and handed one to her. They kissed again, and then drank—another kiss, and she lay down on the bed again. He put out the candle, and stretched himself beside her. They clasped their arms round each other—they slept.



CHAPTER II.

WE must go back in our tale four months—to the very opposite side of the globe, where our winter is summer and our day night. It was four months before Christmas, at the beginning of the Australian spring ; yet, though the promised summer shone bright and lovely, time passed gloomily over the heads of the life-bound convicts in Norfolk Island. They had left their fatherland for ever. No free ticket encouraged them to change, and try for better things. Their exile was for life ; and God's sun only rose, and His days only lengthened, to see them toil at their daily task, watched as felons, in their dress of slavery—without liberty, without hope.

A detachment of them had been sent to the sea-side to repair some roads, and help in the erection of temporary buildings—a gang of twelve, well guarded. One amongst them appeared to have a lighter heart than the others who sullenly went to their labour, and in silence, without thanks, received their food. This man spoke with his keepers in a tone, too, which proved that his manners and education were above theirs. All day long he would hold them in conversation, with open mouth listening to his curious tales ; and yet he reminded them that he did not neglect his work in talking, and his strong muscular frame

supported his boast. He cheered his fellow-convicts too, but always more as a master than an equal; and from his manners, accent, and bearing generally, they gave him the soubriquet of "The gentleman." He acquired a sort of influence over the guards, and was tacitly appointed foreman over the others.

A large load of timber, planks and logs, had been brought for the buildings; and "the gentleman" suggested that it should be thrown on the beach, as there was no house for it, and by being wet from time to time, so kept from splitting in the sun. The planks were laid under a shed, and the trees were thrown on the beach. "The gentleman" was also appointed to see that the wood was watered every morning. Three days after its arrival, he did not return as soon as usual from the beach, and one of the keepers and a convict were sent to look for him. They did not find him at the timber; but, casting their eyes on the water, they perceived him seated on one of the large logs, paddling out to sea. The guard ran back and gave the alarm, and four or five, with their muskets, instantly hurried to the shore. The flying convict had made good way in the meanwhile, but was not yet out of range; the tide, too, was coming in, and impeded his progress much.

"Here, Henderson," said the official in command, "run round to Moreton and get the boat; a sovereign to the boatmen if they take him. And now, men, steady in your aim and fire. The same to the man that hits him."

The men levelled their pieces, and fired—loaded, and fired again.

"Stay," cried their superior; "he's off the wood—he's hit," and they recovered arms.

The log was certainly there, but no man on it. They watched it; was it moving away, or only the motion of

the waves? Ten minutes passed by; the boat could be round from Moreton Point in an hour and a half. Yet, what is that? He's on the log again, paddling away as before.

"He was swimming," they cried, and fired again. He did not mind them. On he went, straining every nerve; it was for liberty and life. The shots rattled from the shore—all fell short, or did not touch him. On, on he went, and now was only a spec in the distant sea. In three hours the boat came round; there had been some difficulty in collecting the sailors; but the convict on his log could not be discerned, and the man in charge thought he did his duty by rowing about for a couple of hours, and then returning to his station.

The convict pursued his way. Towards evening a little wind set in, and he contrived a sort of sail made of his shirt and waistcoat, and holding up one of his paddles as a mast, made way. He had stolen another breakfast with his own; managed to get a loaf from the store; had two bottles of water tied to his waist belt, and a smaller one of milk in his jacket pocket. He made considerable progress during the night; but towards morning felt so tired, that he lowered the sail, and lashed it and himself, with a rope he had also secured, to the block of wood. He closed his eyes and slept; and was awoke by water rushing over him, and raising his head, perceived that it had come on to blow, and that high waves were on each side. He unloosed his fastenings, lest his ungainly bark should turn round, and getting astride on it, lashed himself thus. He managed to eat a morsel of bread, now quite saturated with salt water, but could not venture to raise a bottle to his lips. The gale increased; but though he suffered much from the wet, and consequent cold, as his light vessel offered no resistance to the waves, he was borne on

them instead of being immersed beneath. He had, on leaving Norfolk, steered south-west, hoping to fall in with some vessel from New South Wales, or, perhaps, New Zealand ; but he now feared that he was being driven out into the Pacific, and from the general track of ships.

He tried to raise a water-bottle to his lips ; but a wave striking him at the same time, knocked it from his hand, and it was lost.

The night passed over, and still it blew, and he felt the cold and wet more intensely. The third day broke ; he finished the last of his bread, and managed to take a drink of water. He had seen no ships yet, and he began almost to despair of holding on. There was a lull that day, and made thirsty by his salted bread, he drank all his water, and some of his milk. Towards evening it began to blow afresh. What should he do—the case was almost hopeless—he could never last another night ; and heavy drops of rain now beat on him, and a thunder storm was added to the furious element below. He would hold on till he was washed off ; and the horrible thought of death came upon him, as his strength became weaker, and his resolution less fixed. All the sins of his past life rushed into his mind at once with frightful distinctness. One by one they all came vividly before his mind's eye, from the earliest lie down to that crime for which he became a convict. Since then he had been better ; but it was from circumstances, not from the love of God. He tried to pray ; aloud he cried on God to save him for Christ's sake ; and the roaring of the tempest round him mocked his feeble voice.

"O God," he said within himself, "if Thou wilt only this time pardon and save me from death—for I am not fit to die—my whole life shall be devoted to Thee ; though I am a wicked sinner, I will prove what a penitent child can

do ; Father, hear me ; Jesus, save :" and God's own voice whispered in his heart—God's own word from His own Holy Book—well known, though long forgotten by the castaway, and now recalled, to comfort and strengthen him :—" They that go down to the sea in ships, and occupy their business in great waters : these men see the works of the Lord and his wonders in the deep ; for at his word the stormy wind ariseth, which lifteth up the waves thereof; they are carried up to the heaven, and down again to the deep ; their soul melteth away because of the trouble . . . so when they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, he delivereth them out of their distress ; for he maketh the storm to cease, so that the waves thereof are still ; then are they glad because they are at rest, and so he bringeth them to the haven where they would be. Oh that men would therefore praise the Lord for his goodness, and declare the wonders that he doeth for the children of men." So it was whispered to him, drawn from one of Memory's caverns, falling each word distinctly on the hearing of the mind ; and round, above, below the flashing lightning, beating sea, and roaring tempest, proclaimed that the words were true ; and tears of sorrowing thankfulness streamed from the felon's eyes, as he thought on his early days of happiness, when he so often heard those familiar words, but little guessing that he himself should witness their awful truth ; and another higher hope filled his heart, another energy warmed his blood and strengthened his sinews ; he felt that there was a mightier power than his feeble arm—able to save.

The storm still raged fiercely. The convict clung to his log, and was tossed about. Within he prayed to the God and Father of his Saviour, Jesus Christ, for pardon and peace. Hark ! he hears something 'mid the tempest roar. It was too short a sound for thunder. Ha ! there

it is again. It was a ship's gun—he knew the sound well—a signal of distress. Another, and now another—all to windward—and the sound of each nearer—from the howling of the storm, he could not judge how close. He sat up on his round vessel, and strained his eyes in the direction whence they came. An interval, and now another gun much nearer. Ha ! what dark object is that bearing right down on him—the hulk of a dismasted ship. He shouted with all his might; then, putting out his paddles, strained every nerve to get beside the ship, lest it might overwhelm him. He could make but little way over the great waves, and the dark mass came rolling towards him. Hush ! there is a scream from the deck—it pierces his ear through the angry storm. “It is going to pieces,” he thought, and worked harder to get away from its suction going down. A wave raised him up, and a soft body in the water struck against him. He caught it, and as he recovered himself in the trough of the sea, he perceived that it was a boy, insensible though, but still warm. He passed an end of his rope under the arms, and made him fast to his own waist; then taking off his convict jacket, cast it to the waves; loosed the other end of the rope, leaving his legs braced to the wood still. He looked round; the ship was just beside him. Another wave lifted him up, and as he sunk again he perceived the ship's bows just above. He shouted, but his weak voice was heard not. Merciful God ! it would pass him, and leave him there to perish. Another wave raised him just under the stern, and he touched a rope and managed to catch it as he descended. It came with him : Oh ! horrible, it might be loose, and he was as badly off as before. It left him behind. Hurrah ! it was taut now. His companion behind him, revived by the warmth of his body, groaned.

“Cheer up, my hearty,” cried the convict, “we're safe.”

He pulled himself by degrees towards the vessel, now about fifty yards off. He hauled close.

"Hold me," he said to his companion behind, "the storm is abating; she 'll weather it."

"I am afraid I am not able," replied a feeble voice.

"Well, put your arms round my waist, at all events," and he twined the ship's rope over their heads, round and round their bodies several times; then cutting off the end—for he had his clasp-knife still in his pocket—made it fast. He next pulled himself close under the vessel's side, and cutting the rope which tied his legs to the log, hauled himself and his companion up the side. They clambered over the bulwarks, and pulled themselves towards the stump of a mast, to which the rope was fastened. A group of seven or eight people, lashed here, appeared by the light of the early morning.

"Papa, papa," cried the boy at the convict's back, feebly; and one of the group stretching out his arms towards them with a joyous cry, sank down insensible.

The morning broke, and the storm by degrees subsided; a good distance off, land was seen; towards which they were drifting rapidly.

In answer to the various questions poured on him, the convict replied that he was washed overboard, three days before in the same gale, from a vessel from Liverpool, bound for New Zealand; that he had managed to catch a spar in the water; had lost his own vessel, and supposed that she was wrecked; he had descried this ship just before the boy had been knocked against him; he was carpenter, he said, and captain's clerk on board his own ship. The father of the boy he had saved and the mother, who was lying at the foot of the mast, thanked him in broken voices, for their only son restored to them.

"All accident, sir, on my part," he replied; "it was the

great mercy of God which threw him in my way. But it's a pity, sir, to let this fine ship be lost, as she certainly will be, if she gets nearer the shore—the coast is, I believe, rocky?"

"Well, what can be done?"

"The captain ought to know, sir, better than I."

"No, but what would *you* do?"

"I should try, sir, to find the leak, stop it, put all hands to the pumps, and rig a sail from this broken mast; and so work up to Sidney, and refit."

The gentleman, who appeared to have some authority, called the captain and mentioned the suggestion.

"Faith, sir, it's easy to talk; there's no chance for the ship—except to get to shore the best way we can when she strikes—the carpenter and six of the men are dead drunk."

"But this man is a carpenter," urged the gentleman, "and he can stop the leak."

"Only try, sir, if the captain will allow me."

"Try away, my man—the men have refused to work for me."

"Might I ask for some biscuit and a little spirits." They were handed to him, and he took a little of each; chafing his naked body and arms with the latter."

"There is an iron box in the large cabin," said the gentleman, addressing the convict, "containing papers of great importance to me; I have already offered one hundred pounds if it could be brought on deck, you shall have that if I get it safe on shore, and one hundred pounds more if you save the ship, with fifty pounds for distribution amongst the sailors; quite independent of what I owe you for saving my son's life."

"You owe me nothing for that, sir. Come, captain," and they went forward to the group of sailors.

"Lads," said the convict, "there is only one way of saving the ship—stop the leak, pump out the water, and let us bring her up to Sydney—will you work?"

"There's no use," said one of them; sullenly.

"Better use than drinking that brandy, at all events. The great God that sent the storm can save the ship; come, boys, work; five pounds a man, if you bring the ship into Sydney."

There was a pause.

"I don't care," said one, then another, and they all agreed.

"With a will, lads," said the convict.

"Ay, ay, sir."

And he appointed the gangs for the only pump in order, and went below to search for the leak. Without much difficulty he found it; caulked it; and the water in the hold fell. He went on deck.

"Rig a sail," he said to the captain; "we'll get up to Sydney yet."

He told the gentleman that he would have his box safe; so there was no use in searching for it until the water was cleared out.

The sailors worked indeed, and the sail being hoisted, the ship, obeying the helm, made way from shore. In two days they were off Port Jackson, the entrance to Sydney Harbour. The convict, who gave his name as John Thompson, was looked on as the saviour of the ship. By his modesty and pious demeanour, he won all hearts.

"Not I," he used to say, "but the Lord Almighty, glory be to His name."

Mr. Seymour, who was returning to England from a government situation he held at Port Macquarie, loaded him with kindness; and his son, Frederick, whose life the

convict had saved, was his constant companion, and exhibited a warm affection for him.

As the ship entered Port Jackson, Mr. Seymour, drawing the convict aside, presented a purse to him, saying, "There my dear Thompson, is the money I promised you, two hundred sovereigns; I shall be able, I trust, to show you more substantial marks of my favour and friendship."

"I shall only take twenty of these for the present, sir, to buy some toggery, and leave the rest, if you please, in your hands. You'll not forget the crew, sir; the captain will show you the ten hands—five pounds apiece, sir."

"No, no, my generous fellow; I have already seen to that. Here are the twenty pounds you wish for; I shall take good care of the rest."

A pilot came aboard that evening to bring them up to Sydney. In the morning, Frederick Seymour searched the vessel for Mr. Thompson in vain. The pilot-boat was missing, and the convict could not be found. Two days after, in the *Sydney Hue and Cry*, Mr. Seymour read an account of the escape from Norfolk Island, in a most daring way, of a convict named William Ferguson. He said nothing, but he felt convinced that the man who saved his son, and brought the ship with his valuable property safe into port was this convict.



CHAPTER III.

WE must ask the reader to return with us to the Irish capital again, and imagine a fine day about four months after the events narrated in the last chapter, the Monday after the poor young couple, in the filthy garret, had taken their fatal draught. It was a fine sunshiny, frosty day, this Monday too, and it wooed many a joyous crowd out to the glittering warehouses. But there is one party to which we would call attention ; a lady and gentleman, two little girls, and a boy, in a handsome closed carriage, drove about from shop to shop—milliners, dress-makers, shops of ladies' fancy goods were visited, the pastry cook's, and several toyshops—the whole day was spent, and it was almost quite dark as they made their last call.

A tall-looking man passed by as they entered the shop ; he looked after them, stopped for a second, then moved on a few steps, and re-passed the shop again ; he looked intently in, but the party had gone to the back part of the shop to see some larger toys ; he passed again, but he still could not see them distinctly. “ Whose carriage is this ?” he inquired of the footman.

“ What is it to you ?” was the curt reply.

“ Oh ! nothing very particular, my friend ; don't be

angry, only I thought I knew the gentleman's face going in—his name used to be Rawlinson, I think."

"And if you know so well, what are you asking for?"

"I was right, then; but is this grand carriage his?"

"It is his, I can tell you. Come, move on now," continued the flunkey, as the family came forth from the shop.

The lady and children got in—and the gentleman, happening to look on one side just before he entered, encountered a pair of glittering eyes peering at him through the darkness; he gazed for an instant, slightly started, and got in."

"Home," cried the footman, as he shut the door and sprung up behind.

Let us follow them, as the curious stranger did; only we will get close beside them, and spy into their faces and thoughts; he rushed through the dirty streets, along the curbstones, and only stopped as the carriage drew up at a handsome house in Merrion-square.

The gentleman, though full of life and sprightliness when the toys were inspected, leaned back silently in the carriage, as they drove home. He took no part in his children's joyful conversation, or only answered their innocent remarks by monosyllables.

"Do not be late, Charles dear," said the lady to him as they separated in the hall; "we must have dinner at six punctually, as the children are coming in the evening."

He turned into his study, he drew his arm-chair close to the fire, and sat down; he appeared lost in thought. "It was not him," he said half aloud; "pooh! pooh! it cannot be; I'm a fool." He lighted a taper, and unlocked his escritoire; he touched a spring, and a secret drawer flew open; he raised a false bottom in this, and took out

a paper. "It is madness to keep it any longer—why not destroy it at once?" and he glanced at the fire.

The gong for dressing sounded loudly in the hall behind him; he started like a criminal, and hastily replacing the paper again, closed the drawer and desk. He dressed for dinner, and met his wife in the drawing-room; the children, as a great treat, were allowed to dine with papa and mamma that day; the former, by an effort, joined in their innocent mirth. Some painful thought had entered his mind; and occasionally during dinner he would give way, and laugh with his young people, as was his wont; but then the long-forgotten secret appeared to strike him—and his brows knit and his features convulsed as if in pain, so much so, that his youngest child hoped that "poor papa had not got his toothache again."

His wife, an elegant-looking woman, of about five-and-thirty, perceived the change, looked earnestly at him from time to time, but made no remark.

He was left alone; and the young people hurried up stairs to prepare their playthings for their juvenile friends, who were shortly to arrive. He was left alone, and he sipped his wine, striking his clenched hand from time to time on the polished table, and now pacing before the fire with hasty strides.

"It was he," he said, leaning his head on the mantelpiece; "I could not be mistaken in those eyes."

A servant entered the room, and he resumed his chair.

"A man in the hall, sir, says he wants particularly to see you—something most important."

"I'm engaged; I cannot see any one; tell him so."

The servant was pushed aside, and the emaciated young man of the first chapter, in his old baragon jacket, with face still pale and more haggard, and eye wild with excitement, almost like that of a maniac, rushed in.

"Charles," he cried, kneeling down at the other's feet, "for God's sake hear me. Charity, for the love of heaven. Charles, I kneel to you and beg—I beg from you—my child is dead, I have not money to bury her; her body is rotting beside that of my half-dead wife! I—I have been, by the mighty hand of God, raised from a sleep I thought was death, to ask, beg, pray for money to raise my poor wife up, to bury my dead child—Charles, give"—and he prostrated himself before the other's chair.

Mr. Rawlinson appeared so struck with amazement at first that he could not speak; he now pushed back his chair, in apparent horror, anxious to avoid contact with the pitiable object before him.

"Take him away," he cried to the servant, pointing to the man lying before him. "Take him away! an impostor! I have nothing for him; put him out!"

"No, Charles," said the other, rising up as the servant touched him, "I am not an impostor; and that you know right well—your eye tells me that you recognise me, even in this filth. Man, my child is dead, my wife is dying! and look at me—your own flesh and blood—give me a pound, give ten shillings, five shillings! to bury the one and save the life of the other."

"He is quite mad," said the gentleman to the servant, "put him out—what do you wait for?"

Another actor appeared on the scene, a tall man in a blue pilot coat. He had been waiting, apparently, at the room-door; for as the other spoke last, he made two strides into the room, and confronted him. Neither spoke; the intruder fixed his eye on Mr. Rawlinson, and this latter who had risen from his chair, quailed before the fiery glance—his cheek blanched, and his knees trembled.

"Does Edward Metcalf beg of Charles Rawlinson?" said the stranger.

The young man looked at him. "Is this John?" he asked, doubtfully.

"Ay, Edward, boy. I am your cousin, John Rawlinson—I'll not call you an impostor—I recollect you well," and he shook his hand warmly.

"You're an escaped convict," cried Mr. Rawlinson, turning to the bell. The other had a pistol cocked and presented at him.

"Never mind that bell," he said quietly, "for the present at least. Ha! the flunkey is gone; so much the better, perhaps. And now, Charles, what is the meaning of this? Why do you receive me thus; am I not your cousin? Why do you call him impostor—is he not also cousin? How differently we three met last as boys, to play cricket, at Rhodeley."

"How should I know him?" exclaimed the other.

"You know him well, Charles, and you know too that he ought not to be poor now, and least of all begging from you. Where is the will Uncle Edward made at Rhodeley in June, 1832, to which I was witness?"

The one addressed trembled so violently that he was obliged to sit down.

"Where is that will?" continued the other with vehemence.

Mr. Rawlinson leaned his head on his hand, so overcome was he. The servant, with a policeman, entered the room. Mr. Rawlinson at once recovered himself.

"This is an escaped convict," he said, "sentenced for life. You had better secure him."

The policeman approached.

"Not so fast," cried the other, presenting his pistol. "Run, Edward—I'll bring up the rear." The other reached the hall, and the convict kept the policeman at bay.

This latter sprang his rattle, and the other reached the hall-door. A carriage had just stopped with a parcel of young people for the party upstairs. A fine boy sprung up the steps.

"Oh! dear Mr. Thompson, is this you?" and he caught the convict's arm.

"Frederick, dear, I can't wait now;" and the boy's forehead was kissed, and the other disappeared, followed quickly by the policeman.

Frederick Seymour—for it was he—who had been staying with some friends on his arrival in Dublin, when he reached the drawing-room, gave an animated account of his shipwreck, and the exertions of the convict in saving his life, and afterwards the vessel.

Mr. Rawlinson attempted to discredit the details altogether—said that it was a begging impostor who was in the hall—but Frederick was sure, and told the whole story to his papa when he went home.

The young people had separated, and his children had wished Mr. Rawlinson good-night; he had exerted himself, and appeared unusually gay the whole evening—exhibited his magic lantern, and was the life of the juvenile party.

When all had gone, he told his wife that there was a policeman waiting to see him in the hall, that he had a letter to write also in his study; but that he would not delay long if she went to bed then.

The policeman, who had been called in from the street by the servant, with the superintendent of his division, was below stairs.

Rawlinson brought them into his study.

"You did not catch him?" he asked.

"No, sir—he ran away quickly, and I lost him in the square."

"His name is Rawlinson," resumed the gentleman, "and

he claims some relationship with me. He was always a desperate character, and transported for life about ten years ago for some notorious burglary, in which a life was lost. The name assumed by him was Ferguson, and I think he was convicted under that name. He is a great annoyance and disgrace to me—for I believe I must admit some sort of connection—and if you succeed in arresting him, I shall give £5 to each of you for the trouble."

"Don't mention it, sir," said the senior official. "We shall do our best; and I have little doubt but that we shall have him to-night or to-morrow; the detectives are already on his track."

"Good-night, then, my friends, and let me know when he is taken."

"We shall, sir."

And he was left alone. He waited till the servant had locked the hall-door, told him to go to bed, and then returned to his study. He paced up and down—after a little, went into the hall to listen if all the house was still. All was quiet. He went quietly to the top of the back stairs; there was no noise, all the servants were in bed. On tip-toe he returned. He carefully closed the study door, and then opened his bureau and the secret drawer again, and took out the paper he had looked at before dinner; and drawing his chair opposite the fire, sat down. He opened the folded sheet—the writing on it appeared to move him violently; his face became ashy-pale, and drops of perspiration stood on his brow. He poked up the fire, and was about to throw the paper in. No—he held his hand.

"Fool—fool that I am and have been," he muttered impatiently; "who will know it?"

"God will," something within him whispered; he could not prevent himself hearing—hearing with his mind's ear.

"God's eye is in every place, beholding the evil and the good," the hidden whisper said, and he half looked round in alarm to see was he indeed watched.

"He is about thy path and about thy bed, and spieth out all thy ways," again he heard within, and he raised the paper to read it and to divert his thoughts.

Shall we look at it over his shoulder? It ran:—

"My last Will and Testament.

"I, Edward Rawlinson, of Rhodeley, in the County of K——, being in sound mind, do will and bequeath all my property, real and personal, whatever I may die possessed of, to my nephew, Edward Metcalf, the only child of my dear deceased sister, Eliza Metcalf, otherwise Rawlinson.

"Also, after my funeral expenses and other just debts are paid, I bequeath the following legacies:—£100 to Henry Halford, my old trusty servant; £50 to Jane, his wife, my cook and housekeeper; and £200 to my steward and gardener, Thomas Pigeon.

"And I appoint the said Edward Metcalf my sole executor.

"EDWARD RAWLINSON.

"Witnesses present,

"JOHN MATTHEWS.

"JOHN RAWLINSON."

The reader's brow grew dark, and his teeth crashed together as he read the name of the last witness.

With a frightful imprecation he exclaimed, "What brings him back now?"—and with a hasty impatient jerk, he threw the paper from him into the fire, and jumping from his chair, walked about the room as if not to witness its destruction. He looked at the fire; part of the will hung over the bar still unconsumed. He seized one of the fire-irons, and with blind rage poked it between the

bars again. He got calm by degrees, and looked to see if any fragment had escaped. No, all had disappeared. He closed his escritoire, lighted his bed-chamber candle, and went through his well-furnished house to repose on his luxurious bed. The guilty felon went lightly up the stairs, as if a load was off his mind—the conscience-whisper, in the house of wealth and comfort, unheeded and forgotten—thought of by the starving wretch who planned self-murder—felt by the criminal tossed on the mighty ocean—contemned and slighted by one with all that this world calls happiness at his feet. The still small voice which speaks in the heart of all, and teaches the most ignorant that there is such a thing as sin—dull, heavy, warped in some; in others flexible and finely-strung, answering quickly and with true note to the slightest touch—conscience, memory, and knowledge, the eye, ear, and touch of human thought.



CHAPTER IV.

THE convict, as he ran from Mr. Rawlinson's house, followed by the policeman, whispered to Edward in passing, "Meet me at Change-alley in an hour;" then, wheeling round into the middle of the street, darted past his pursuer, in the opposite direction, and succeeded in completely eluding him, as has been narrated; then, a little later, in a different coat and cap, he was in Change-alley, and perceived the young man in the baragon jacket waiting for him."

"Ah! Edward, my poor fellow, you look cold. I had a run for it that time. You see I've changed my toggery; but you're hungry, and I heard you speak of your wife; come in here," and he dragged him into a tavern close at hand.

"Bread and cheese, and a bottle of porter," he called for.

"Oh! John, I can't eat, my poor wife is dying; let us get a doctor for her."

"Eat, man, eat first, and then we'll go. Here, drink this. Stay, I'll warm it for you, and put sugar in it. That's right; come now, let us go;" and having paid the reckoning, they left.

Edward Metcalf, as they hurried through the streets,

told of the horrible resolve he and his wife had come to on the day before; that he had awoke that evening about six; he thought that he had left his wife sleeping still, but alive—he felt her heart beat—that he had started up, and rushed to Rawlinson's house.

"That was bad, Edward dear," replied his companion, "to tempt the Almighty, who is so much more good to us than we deserve. Ah! Edward, I have indeed experienced His goodness—I am not what I once was—but where did you buy the laudanum?"

Metcalf showed the shop, and his companion entered.

"A poor woman, sir," he said, has taken an overdose of laudanum, and is sleeping unnaturally long; her friends are alarmed, and beg you will hurry at once with such antidotes as may be necessary. You shall be well paid for your trouble," he went on, displaying a sovereign.

The apothecary trotted about, got some mixtures, and a stomach-pump, and followed.

They climbed the dark ricketty stairs in silence, and entered the small garret. Edward groped about, and having got a match, lighted the candle, and beckoned them to the bed. The convict threw a glance of pity round.

"How much did she take?" asked the apothecary, having felt her pulse.

"Half the full of this bottle," replied her husband.

"You don't say so," exclaimed the other, examining the phial. "It was got at my shop, I see," and he poured a drop on his hand, and tasted it. "It was solution of laudanum my man gave you, not laudanum itself—there's a chance for her."

He shook her, and she appeared about to awake. He put her in a sitting posture. She aroused herself somewhat more. He poured some out of a bottle he had, on a spoon,

and made her swallow it. By degrees she became more sensible ; and, after an hour's exertion, was fully awake, but very languid.

" Give her plenty of nourishment now," said the medical man, " and she will do very well. Some jelly, if you could get it, and arrowroot ; and then a little meat by degrees."

" The child sleeps soundly," he remarked to the father.

" Aye," he replied, " I believe you—it is the sleep of death !"

" My God—is it dead ? What did it die of?"

" Hunger," was the short reply.

" And you two took poison when you had nothing more. Oh, you poor unfortunate things, I pity you. Come along back with me, and I'll give you some strengthening draughts, and some jelly, I think I can make out. No, no, no payment," he continued, pushing aside a piece of gold he saw in Rawlinson's hand, " give it to them."

" Edward, do you stay here and I'll go with the doctor," said Rawlinson, and he went out.

He soon returned with phials, jelly, and a bottle of wine.

" Rouse her, Edward, man, and don't let her fall back into stupor again. Keep her up in the bed ; here, let me give her this, and take a cup of wine yourself. Come, cheer up, old fellow, you shall drink my health in Rhodeley yet. I have got a better room for you, by the way, below stairs, and the woman of the house is putting a fire in it. I'll be up just now, and will carry your wife down—the poor little body can stay here."

And they were all comfortable at last, and had a little supper prepared ; and Kate Metcalf by degrees recovered herself ; and was introduced to her cousin, and the three

talked contentedly of old times, and looked hopefully on the future.

"That scoundrel," said Rawlinson, "he has no more right to the property than I have. Did you mind how he quaked and grew pale when I spoke of the will?"

"Yes," replied Metcalf, "he was completely dumbfounded. I always understood that my poor uncle had made a will in my favour."

"So he did," said the other, "and I was witness to it—I and old Matthews, his agent—he's dead now, I'm afraid. I happened to be staying with him at the time. He was thinking, I believe, then, of giving me a lump sum, and sending me to America—bad companions and my own ungovernable temper prevented it. I recollect the butler, cook, and old gardener had legacies, but everything else was left to you—and you were sole executor, too. You may imagine my surprise, then, when I saw Charles Rawlinson, the noted spendthrift and gambler, stepping out of a handsome carriage in Grafton-street; and afterwards driving to a magnificent house in Merrion-square. I only landed on the quays this afternoon at three o'clock. I don't know what kept me loitering near Rawlinson's house—until you staggered by me—it was not walking—and I half recognized you, yet not sure, turned and followed you. When you were let into the house—the servant did not close the street door—I pushed it in and entered. That rascal—I wonder what date is the will he claims by?"

"1816, I think."

"Twenty-six years ago—before he had seen you—you were an infant almost then, and Charles Rawlinson a lad of great promise at Oxford; but he ran a nice rig—some said he forged. However, he was cast off, and you were taken up on your mother's death, and were at Eton when

the will I witnessed was made. Now, what happened after that?"

"I married, that was all; I went then to introduce my bride to him, and he ordered me out, and would never answer any letter I wrote to him. He died suddenly about three years ago; and Charles was at Rhodeley, or hurried there immediately, as next heir; and the one will only was found, by which he was left everything, and appointed executor with a gentleman who has died since, a Mr. Meldon, I think."

Rawlinson gazed at the fire intently for some moments.

"Charles possesses the other will or has destroyed it, I am sure," he said at length; "and I argue this from the very habit our uncle had of not destroying papers, as appears from the will made in 1816, under which Charles claimed, being fifteen years old at least; and to my certain knowledge another one was made after that, which was not destroyed either, I am convinced."

"Did you know Rhodeley well, Edward?"

"Yes, I rather think I did," replied the other smiling.

"Did you ever see the little panel near the fire-place in the room, where Uncle Edward slept?" asked Rawlinson.

"No."

"Oh! well it was there, and I saw him open it, too. No matter where I was or why I watched him; but he went to it very often; generally as he was going to bed. I would give something to know if Charles discovered it. Who is at Rhodeley now?"

"A caretaker, I suppose. Charles has always lived in town since the old man died; but I hardly think the place you speak of escaped his search."

"I should like to try, however. Who were the witnesses to the will under which Charles claims?"

"I forgot."

"Well, I shall get a copy of the will to-morrow, or rather do you. Here's a sovereign and some silver. The perogative court you know—the fee is five shillings. I shall start off for Rhodeley to-morrow morning early; the sooner I am out of Dublin the better, I think. And now before I go—for I cannot get a bed here I find—let us thank the God of all mercies for restoring you to life, and not letting you die with the awful sin of self-murder on your head;" and on receiving a joyful assent, he took a small Testament from his pocket, and read the third chapter of the first epistle of Peter, making some observations on the words of comfort as he went on. "Now we shall pray;" and both kneeling near the bed, Rawlinson, in words, partly from the Church of England liturgy, and partly in those suited to their immediate case, offered heartfelt, humble prayers to the Almighty. "Now goodnight, and get to bed as soon as you can." Then bowing to Mrs. Metcalf he turned to leave.

A shaggy-looking head peered into the room, and was hastily withdrawn. Rawlinson approached the door, and a couple of policemen sprang in, and struck him down with their batons. He was handcuffed and searched in an instant—Mrs. Metcalf shrieked; her husband stood motionless.

"Ha! my fine fellow; you changed your clothes, did you? but you were dodged for all that. Come along now, old boy; you'll trot back to Botany again."

"Only a day here!" said the convict in despair.

"So much the better, old fellow, you'll miss your liberty the less. Ah! there's no escaping the police. Come now, tramp."

"Just wait a moment, will you? To what gaol am I going?"

"Oh! Newgate, of course."

"Edward," he went on, addressing his cousin ; "find out a Mr. Seymour lately arrived from Fort Macquarie. I don't know where he is in town, but tell him that John Thompson is in Newgate goal, and wishes to see him."

"I will, John."

"Can't you wait one moment?" he continued, as they made an impatient gesture. "And here, Edward, pull off my boots; they pinch me dreadfully, and there are nails in them, and give me your old shoes. Wait now, don't ask me to walk, and I in pain. Pull, that's it; now the socks. Give me the shoes now, they're nice and cool. Knock down the nails in those boots before you put them on. Now, let us go." And they went out.

"What made him leave the boots, I wonder?" said Edward to his wife, putting his hand into one. "There's no nail there;" and he tried the other. He pulled out a rag that was in the toe; and unrolling it found half a bank of England note for five pounds. "Ha! here's the nail" he cried, throwing it to his wife joyfully. "Let us look for the other half." And in the stocking of the other foot the other half was found. "What presence of mind he has!" he said; "I can get my clothes now, and look for this Mr. Seymour in the morning."

"But why is he arrested, Edward dear?"

"Poor fellow, it's a long story; and I do think there are others as much to blame as he. He was the illegitimate son of my uncle's elder brother—with considerable natural abilities, which were never cultivated; he was thrown, in his earlier days, altogether amongst a low and vicious class of associates. And his mother, a woman of humble origin and little principle, always taught him to expect a great deal, too much from his father's relations; and imagining that he was badly treated and robbed by them, he scrupled not to help himself from the goods of

others. He had become so notoriously bad, that Uncle Edward having, from time to time, given him and his mother a great deal of money, at last determined to send him off to America, and brought him to Rhodeley to try and induce him to reform his life and go. He was there about a month, and behaved himself, I recollect hearing, remarkably well, so well that uncle gave, or intended to give, a couple of hundred pounds into his hand, on condition that he would at once sail; he left Rhodeley, met some of his former bad companions, engaged in a dreadful robbery, was taken and transported for life."

"Merciful God!" exclaimed his wife, "such a handsome, good man; and so religious too."

"Yes, he is greatly changed. God grant that this Mr. Seymour he speaks of may be able to do something for him;" and Metcalf, as a neighbouring clock struck two, prepared to go to bed.

Mr. Rawlinson was still in the breakfast-room the next morning, when a card was handed to him. "A gentleman in the study wishes to speak to you, sir," said the servant.

"Very well," stammered his master; "say I shall see him in a moment."

Rawlinson had grown very pale.

"Who is it, love?" asked his wife.

"A Mr. Seymour, he replied; "father, I suppose, of that boy who was with us last night. Plague him! what brings him here?"

"Oh! no matter; but had you not better see him at once. He's staying at the Lawrences'; and you could ask him to come to dinner to-morrow with them."

"Will you let me finish my breakfast," he said gruffly.

"I thought you were done some time ago."

After a little delay, he went to see his visitor. His manner was most bland and courteous.

"Mr. Seymour," he said, bowing, "pray be seated. I was just at breakfast when your card was handed to me. Have you breakfasted?"

"Oh! yes, thank you," replied the other; "the Lawrences are very early people. Indeed, I must apologize for this untimely call; but I am most anxious to learn something of a man whom my little son saw here last night, and under very peculiar circumstances. Frederick says that you told him he was an impostor. I have only two questions to ask—Can you tell me is he an escaped convict, and was he transported under the name of William Ferguson?"

"And those I can answer readily—in the affirmative. He knew me before he left Ireland, and came last evening to pester me for money; and, on my refusal, became positively insolent; had the audacity to present a pistol at my head, and had not my servant opportunely entered the room with a policeman, I know not what would have happened."

"He escaped the policeman though"—

"Yes, unfortunately; but I have every reason to believe that he is taken by this time. I told them he was an escaped convict; a frightful thing to have such a fellow loose on society—armed too."

"Well, I hope he is taken, as I shall thus more easily find him; for I mean to use every effort with the Government to procure his pardon.

"My dear sir," cried Mr. Rawlinson, starting up, "don't do such a thing. Why, he's one of the greatest villains unhung; a notorious scoundrel from his very boyhood; I know him these years past. If you are inclined to serve him—and your son mentioned that he saved his life—let him be taken back to Botany Bay, and then liberated—and do what you please for him—but you do him more

harm than good by freeing him here, amongst his old companions, where his bad character is so well known. Besides," he went on, in an excited way, interrupting Mr. Seymour, who was about to speak, "I will tell you something else in strict confidence—he's an illegitimate relation of my own; his real name is John Rawlinson—his mother was a frightful woman. Why, sir, only fancy, he went to the house of my poor, dear uncle, at Rhodeley, and threatened him, as he did me, until he gave him two hundred pounds; and with this in his pocket he went off and committed the daring burglary and murder for which he was transported for life. Could you have it on your conscience to procure the pardon of such a one?"

"Even such a one, Mr. Rawlinson, may repent and be forgiven by a higher tribunal than any on earth—and I have good reason to believe that he is changed; besides, he has placed me under such a debt of gratitude that I never can repay; he saved my only child's life, in circumstances when another would have left him to perish; and he was instrumental in bringing safe into port a half-wrecked ship, containing much valuable property of mine, and family papers of the greatest importance;" and he rose. "Oh, by the way, will you allow me to ask, whether this John Matthews, whose name I saw accidentally on this scrap of paper, is alive now? I have seen his name on various documents I have been looking over these few days past, and may want to have them proved; he was an agent and attorney, somewhere in K——, I think."

And as he spoke he took up a small little scrap of scorched paper which had been laid on the table, picked up from the floor, it would seem, by the carefulness of a particular servant, who had been often told never to sweep away anything with writing on it.

Rawlinson's cheek, which had been a little flushed, blanched deadly pale; for a moment he did not speak, his eye then glared furiously, and he rushed over to the other—"Give that to me," he said, fiercely, attempting to snatch it from Mr. Seymour's hand; this latter had retreated instinctively, and placed his hand with the scrap of paper behind him. "Give it," persisted the other, pressing on him, and at last grappling him by the throat and arm. Mr. Seymour, though low-sized, was strongly made, and shook him off to some paces distant.

"Stand off, sir," he said; "what do you mean by this conduct?"

"Give me that scrap of paper," cried the other.

"I shall not give it to you now, sir; your manner and countenance all confirm the suspicion in my mind, that some great wrong has been done—which I shall certainly, with God's help, sift to the bottom, and will retain this bit of paper to aid me in doing so;" and he placed it in his pocket.

"I see another name also on it," he continued, "John Rawlinson; and he and Matthews were witnesses to something—a will perhaps, which you have burned. I have tried two cases very like this before, in Australia."

Rawlinson grew absolutely frantic. He sprang to the fireplace, and seizing the poker, approached Mr. Seymour. "Give me that paper," he said, in a low hissing voice between his teeth, "or, as sure as God is in heaven, I'll murder you where you stand."

"It will be by the aid of Satan and not of the Almighty that you will accomplish such a feat, my friend," replied Mr. Seymour, coolly; "and the police need not be sent for either, for I see two coming up your hall-door steps."

And a single knock and ring were heard.

Rawlinson laid down the poker. "Will you let me have

"that paper?" he asked in quieter tones, or else I shall give you in charge for robbery."

"Very good; I shall be rather pleased if you do," replied the other with perfect *nonchalance*.

"Come, say in a word what will you take and give it to me—£500?"

Mr. Seymour smiled, and shook his head.

"£1000? £1500? There, I'll make it £2000, and give it to you before you leave the room."

"The superintendent of E. Division of police is in the hall, sir," said the servant, opening the door.

"Say I'm engaged, Thomas—say I'm engaged; beg of him to call again," exclaimed Rawlinson, hurriedly.

"Pray don't mind me," said Mr. Seymour, snatching up his hat, and leaving the room.

"He's caught, sir," cried the policeman in the hall—thinking at first that it was the owner of the house.

"Oh! the convict," replied Mr. Seymour—understanding him at once—"you've caught him—that's right—and where is he?"

"Safe in Newgate, sir. I was just coming to tell Mr. Rawlinson."

"Very good," responded Mr. Seymour, opening the door, and going out.

He watched in the square until the police came out of the house; then, turning round, met them.

He drew the senior official apart from his companion.

"I have every reason to think that this Mr. Rawlinson has committed a great crime—although I have not sufficient evidence yet to procure his arrest. My name is Seymour—well known at the Castle. Now I want you to watch that house, in case he should attempt to run."

"We had better put a detective on him; hadn't we, sir?"

"Take whatever steps you consider most prudent. member he is only to be strictly and privately watc until you hear further from me. Here are a couple sovereigns for you," and calling a cab, Mr. Seymour dr off.



CHAPTER V.

EARLY that morning Edward Metcalf, having commissioned the woman of the house to order a plain coffin for the child, went out to search in the large city for Mr. Seymour. All day he inquired at the hotels and shipping-offices ; he could get no information, and at last he directed his steps towards Newgate, to tell the convict of the ill-success of his endeavours. The hour for the admission of visitors had passed, and he was gruffly repulsed. As he turned to go, a cab drove quickly up, and two gentlemen getting out, proceeded to knock at the gate. They seemed like men in authority, and taking off his hat politely, Edward begged to know if they could procure him entrance for one moment to speak to a prisoner.

"Pon my word, I don't know," said the elder of the two, at once taking cognizance of Metcalf's manner and address, notwithstanding his shabby coat ; "we are only going to get out a friend, not to see anyone. Come into the yard with us, and we can ask for you, at all events," he went on, as the gate opened.

"Here, my good friend," he continued, addressing the senior turnkey present, "here is an order from the Lord Lieutenant for the body of William Ferguson, *alias* John Rawlinson—an escaped convict—placed here last night."

"Why, he's the man I want to see," cried Edward.

"Excellent; he'll be here in a moment."

"And you are Mr. Seymour?"

"Yes. How did you guess that, though?"

"I am John Rawlinson's cousin, and have been looking for you all day to tell you he was taken."

"Well; you have found me now, and just at the right time—your cousin's a free man."

"May God Almighty bless you," said Edward fervently, with a tearful eye—"there's a great deal depending on his release."

"A property, eh! and a will?"

"Has he told you?"

"Oh! no matter. But here he is."

Mr. Seymour read from the paper in his hand:—"Her Majesty has been pleased to extend her gracious pardon to John Thompson, *alias* William Ferguson, *alias* John Rawlinson, late a convict for life in Norfolk Island, New South Wales, and to permit his return to his native country. Dated this 24th day of December, 18—."

"God save the Queen," he added, taking off his hat, and giving it a wave in the air.

Rawlinson caught his hand. His emotion was too great for words; he moved his lips, his eyes filled, he gulped down again, but at last gave way in a flood of tears.

"May the Lord Almighty bless you," he said at length, taking Mr. Seymour's hand again, and pressing it to his heart; "and He will. I'm free, free again—no longer convict, with the heavy chain of guilt keeping me down for ever. Free, free again, to work, toil for a good name once more; and praise that God who has not cast away His creature." And kneeling down, he covered his face with his hands, and bowed his head in prayer.

In silence they all stood round him. At length he rose,

and Mr. Seymour again shook hands with him, and Edward also did the same.

"This is Mr. Potterton," said Mr. Seymour, naming the individual who had accompanied him, "a legal gentleman, at whose office we have a little business, and then you'll all dine with me. Come along," and entering the cab, they drove away.

When they were seated in Mr. Potterton's office, Mr. Seymour said—

"I have mentioned to Mr. Potterton the leading facts of the case, as far as it came before me. The point is now about the signature," and he drew the little scrap of paper from his pocket. "Now," he went on, addressing Rawlinson, "you will be very careful in answering—consider well before you do—for I feel that a very weighty point is involved in the matter."

"He had better write his name before you show him the paper," suggested Mr. Potterton, and Rawlinson did so.

The solicitor took the paper he wrote on, with the scrap, over to a lamp, and compared them.

"Well?" asked Mr. Seymour.

"All right," said the solicitor, handing him back the scrap."

"Now, Mr. Rawlinson," continued Mr. Seymour, putting the scrap of paper into his hand, "there is part of your name—John Rawlins—on that paper. Is it your hand-writing or not?"

"Oh! Edward, hurrah! it's all right; that's my signature to the will. Hurrah! it's all right—and old Matthews too. I'd swear to both anywhere."

"Yes, but, Mr. Rawlinson," said the solicitor, "you and Mr. Matthews might have been witness to some other document besides the will to which you allude."

"No, no, we never were," replied Rawlinson; "and it

was by accident that we were together then. But there is no doubt in the matter; I can swear that I saw him write those very words there before me, and I can further swear that I wrote those words, we both being witness to a will made, I think in June, 1832, by my late uncle, Edward Rawlinson, of Rhodeley, in the County of K., by which he bequeathed all his property to his nephew there, Edward Metcalf; and I will give my reasons why I can so positively swear to those very identical signatures. Old Matthews wrote, ‘witness present’ and his name before me, and the pen spluttered greatly—see here are the marks—and when I took the pen, I made a sort of cross before writing to get the nibs straight—see, here it is also—so there’s not a shadow of doubt about it.”

“ Could we get hold of any other documents relating to the intention of the deceased ?” said Mr. Potterton, inquiringly.

“ If you were down at Rhodeley, I’m sure there are plenty in that old panel in his bed-room.”

“ Excellent—that is just the thing,” and the solicitor spoke apart with Mr. Seymour. “ You and Potterton will go down with a search-warrant to Rhodeley to-night, which we shall get at once—together with a warrant for the arrest of your friend in Merrion-square,” said the latter, addressing Rawlinson. “ Your oath and what I have witnessed is sufficient to justify our application. *Allons*, then. You’ll dine with me afterwards at Morrison’s Hotel, and then start by the late train.”

Edward excused himself on account of his sick wife, and Mr. Seymour saying that he would call on him the next day, they separated.

As they were at dinner, one of the waiters told Mr. Seymour that a man in the hall wished to speak to him. The latter went out, and returned quickly, saying—

"He has escaped us. He was not at home when the police went, and there is every probability that he has fled. A man on guard has remained in the house, and notice is being given at all the stations; but if he left by my mid-day train, he is off. Every thing depends now on the success of your visit to Rhodeley."

As soon as dinner was over they called a cab, and set off for the railway station—Mr. Seymour, before they went, asking Rawlinson where his cousin Edward lived, and telling him to come to a house he had taken, immediately on their return.

The next morning, after breakfast, Mr. Seymour made his way to the humble lodging of Edward Metcalf. They were getting the little child into the coffin as he arrived, and the poor mother was crying over the body.

"I did not know yesterday you had a child dead," said Mr. Seymour.

"Oh! yes," replied the father; "it is dead these three days. Sir, sir, for God's sake, get my wife to the lower room until the coffin is taken down stairs. I am going to the graveyard with it."

"Well, do you stay with your wife—you are the fittest comforter in such circumstances—and I will attend the funeral. Come now, I insist."

Edward brought his wife from the room, and the humble funeral moved on.

Mr. Seymour returned in about an hour.

"It's all over," he said; "Was she your only one?"

"Ah! yes," sobbed the wife, "our only one. Oh! sir, it's very hard to bear."

"But it might be much worse, dear Mrs. Metcalf. How much harder would it have been if your husband had been taken? That would have been real anguish and sorrow; the poor little girl has been removed from a world of

care and temptation to one of peace and joy. You are both young, and may reasonably expect that He who has taken away may also give. What was the illness she died of?"

Both parents' eyes filled with tears.

"Want, Mr. Seymour," replied Edward, with emotion. "The poor little darling died of hunger, and that makes us feel the loss more bitterly."

"And that villain had your money. But you must get out of this hole; you have not much to pack up, so suppose you come to the lodgings I engaged the day before yesterday—at all events, until this will business is settled one way or the other. Come, Mrs. Metcalf, say yes."

"Oh! sir, I cannot express my thanks for your kindness."

"That's right, you'll come; well, I'll just get a cab and be back again."

When he was gone, they called the hostess to settle with her, but learned she had been paid by Mr. Seymour as he was going down. The cab came, and they were soon comfortably established in Clare-street.

"This is my son, Frederick," said Mr. Seymour, introducing his child. "Now, Frederick, you must be very attentive to this lady, whom I am going to leave in your charge for the rest of the day;" and taking Metcalf out of the room, he said—

"Come, Metcalf, you want to get clothes, I dare say. I had better lend you something;" and putting a purse into his hand, he hurried down stairs.

He went to Merrion-square; a detective in plain clothes opened the door for him.

"Oh! sir, we have made great discoveries since. It appears that the man-servant here was going up stairs as his master stole out of the study, apparently to listen if

the house was quiet. He passed the servant in a corner of the hall—the man can swear that; afterwards he distinctly smelted paper burning in the front parlour; and in the ashes taken from the grate this morning, we have found several morsels of half-burnt paper, with writing, now almost illegible—only bits and parts of words; however, all together make excellent evidence; and the housemaid found the scrap you have under the fender."

"It is capital, my good friend—the Almighty's hand is clearly visible in it all. He will not allow crime to prosper. Go, and try if I can see Mrs. Rawlinson."

The man returned soon, saying that the lady would see him in the drawing-room; she had been weeping, and burst into tears when he entered.

"Oh! sir, have pity on my poor children," she exclaimed at length.

"My dear madam, nothing rests with me. I have been made the instrument, under Providence, of bringing to light a most atrocious deed, committed without doubt by your husband—his flight admits it—and the only child of him he has robbed died a few days ago of actual starvation."

"Then he will have no pity on me or mine."

"Far be it from him. He has, I trust, learned pity by his own hardships; and why should he punish you and your children for your husband's guilt? But what I wish to hear is, will you resign all claim and pretension to the Rhodeley property on condition of receiving a certain fixed sum—what it may be I, of course, will not say?"

"Oh! gladly; I will take anything."

"You are fully convinced, then, of your husband's guilt."

"Don't, don't ask," she said, imploringly, covering her face with her hand.

"Nay, nay, madam, you are not in a court of justice. I am not seeking to entrap you into any admission. I merely wished to ascertain if you were convinced that neither your husband nor your children had any claim on the Rhodeley property."

"Yes, yes, I admit that. I do not think we had ever any right to that property."

"Would you just put that on paper, and I could show it to Mr. Metcalf, and perhaps make some arrangement at once on your behalf."

"I will," and she sat down and wrote at his dictation—

"I, Sophia Rawlinson, on the part of myself and children, do resign all claim and title to the property, real and personal, supposed to have been inherited by my husband, Charles Rawlinson, from his uncle, Edward Rawlinson, of Rhodeley, in the County of K—.

"SOPHIA RAWLINSON."

And Mr. Seymour having attached his name as witness, put the paper in his pocket, and wished her good evening.

The little party in Clare-street were just going to tea when Mr. Potterton and John Rawlinson entered.

"Ah! returned so soon!" cried Mr. Seymour.

"Aye," said Mr. Potterton, "and did nothing. There was not the ghost of a paper in that old panel—though I'm sure it was the place the old chap kept all his documents—and we got nothing but a fine appetite, and some information that we will let out by degrees."

And they sat down, and having made a comfortable meal, Mr. Potterton then told that he had received a hint of where Matthews was—that it was thought he was living with some daughter in the north of Ireland—that there was an insurance on his life not yet paid, and he had further learned what insurance company had issued the

policy ; and when he had heard the further evidence that had come to light, he exclaimed :

“ There’s no jury would hesitate a moment about a verdict.”

The next morning, Christmas-day, Mr. Seymour was awakened early by a message that a policeman wanted him ; and having dressed and gone down stairs, he learned that they had Mr. Rawlinson in a carriage outside—that he had been taken at Liverpool, having been mistaken for the convict, to whom he bore some resemblance, and whose description was in the *Hue and Cry*.

“ We want to know surely is he the right man ?”

“ Take him to Mr. Potterton’s, No. 8 Ely-place, and I’ll follow you. We’ll identify him there.”

Mr. Potterton was a bachelor, and was just going to breakfast as they were shown into his office.

He and Mr. Seymour whispered together.

“ Let the police go outside for a little,” said the latter, and they were left alone with Rawlinson, who was manacled.

“ The game’s up, Mr. Rawlinson,” said Potterton ; “ Evidence as clear as possible—more bits of paper found in the ashes, with the words of the will written on them. Your own servant also smelled paper burning after you had stolen out of your study to try was the house quiet ; and old Matthews, too, has turned up to prove his signature to the will which he wrote. So it’s Botany Bay for life for you, I’m afraid. You’ll be tried in a month, and sail in six weeks. A pleasant prospect—eh ?”

The other shuddered.

“ Have you anything to say why Mr. Metcalf should not prosecute you ?” he went on.

“ My poor wife and children,” muttered the culprit.

“ Then you admit that you burned the will.”

“ Why should I admit it ? what good would it do me ?”

" You might be a free man to-morrow, that's all—or to-day for that matter."

" I'll give up Rhodeley quietly, and all the other property I have—will that do?"

" Do you authorize me to say that to my client?"

" I do."

And the police were requested to keep their prisoner at Mr. Potterton's office, while this gentleman and Mr. Seymour hastened back to Clare-street. Metcalf and his wife were in the breakfast parlour when they arrived.

" My Christmas-box on you both," cried Mr. Potterton, jumping in, and holding out his hands. " Hurrah! hurrah! Rhodeley is yours."

And the good news of the morning was told, and it was agreed that Charles Rawlinson should get £1,000, if he gave up everything else that he possessed quietly.

Edward would have given him more.

" No, no," cried Potterton; " that will take him to Australia, and set him up well there. Make it a condition that he goes, and not stay to gamble here."

What a happy breakfast they had, and with what thankful hearts they all praised God for His goodness in His house of prayer that day, and in humble gratitude and faith partook of the Sacrament which their Saviour had appointed in remembrance of His sufferings and love. And Edward Metcalf, as he entered on possession of the ample means now at his command, enjoyed them with a quiet joy, tempered by past suffering. Amid his comforts he thought of those who had them not; and many on that Christmas-day, whose poverty he had seen and felt, were made happy. Nor was the poor woman of Golden-lane, who sold him the baragon jacket, the least cared for; and through his after life he endeavoured to impress on his humble friends and tenants, when any were tempted to

repine at their Heavenly Father's dealings, and rebel against His chastisements, the "still small voice" he had himself once heard whispering, and had disregarded—"Put thy trust in the Lord, and be doing good; dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed."

Charles Rawlinson went to the other side of our vast world; his well-nurtured wife, loving him even though guilty, clinging to him—a true woman—in his misery—sailed with him, accompanied by their delicate children, bearing the penalty of the father's crime.

Like a proper helpmeet, Mrs. Rawlinson set herself to cheer and comfort her husband in his new home; to encourage and urge him forward to higher and better things—better as regards this world, higher and holier as regards the next—"the believing wife sanctifying the husband." And made wise by that Book which "has the promise of the life that now is and also of that which is to come," Charles Rawlinson, through his own honest exertions, having attained independence and respectability, learned to venerate and regard the sacred words once whispered in vain to his hardened conscience—"The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good."

And John Rawlinson, the waif thrown on the rugged shore of human scorn from the wreck of woman's virtue; the nameless one, bearing on his shoulders the consequences of others' sin, one of the scape-goats of society; he, the outcast, the felon, the convict, who heard the voice of God speaking on the waters, and listened; to whose heart the Holy Spirit, Heavenly Dove, brought peace—peace from God—the result of true repentance and faith in His Son—he, by the kind offices of Mr. Seymour, obtained a colonial appointment, which he filled with such integrity and zeal, as eventually to secure a high position; and he

found, ere he left Ireland for ever, an old playmate who could forget the stain of his birth, and the deeper stain of an erring life, and was willing to go with him and share his fortune.

And as husband and wife in rolling years spoke of his conversion on the wild sea, of God's subsequent goodness and blessings to His child, the words of the Psalmist found an echo in their hearts—"Oh ! that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and declare the wonders that he doeth for the children of men."



GRACE KENNEDY.

CHAPTER I.

GN a raw evening in December, 183—, just after dusk, a wild-looking, haggard man entered a little hovel near the side of a by-road between Hollywood and Escar, in the Queen's County.

“Well, what have you got?” cried a shrill voice from the interior of the hut, which proceeded from a woman crouching over a turf fire, burning dimly, from the damp of the material placed on it.

“Ye got nothing?” she asked again, not having received an answer to her former query.

“Nothing!” was the sullen rejoinder, as the man, approaching the fire, drew a broken stool to him and sat down amongst the ashes; on one side of him the female half-sitting, half-lying against the corner of the recess in which was the fire, her covering being a thin, torn blanket on her shoulders, and a ragged black petticoat about her loins. Opposite to her were two little children, from about three to five years, the younger altogether naked; the other with a ragged piece of linen hanging about it;

both crouched over the burning turf, looking up to the man with their dark, inquiring eyes.

After a short silence, the woman again addressed her husband, for such was the relation of the parties—

“An’ did ye get no work?”

“The sorra bit.”

“Wasn’t Mr. Rawson at home!”

“He was.”

“Well?”

The man made no answer, but asked—

“Where’s the ould pot?”

The woman sprung to her feet, and brought over an old pot, with a triangular piece broken out of the side.

“Well, honey,” she said, in a soothing voice.

The man put his hand in his pocket and drew out a dead fowl, with the neck twisted. The children uttered a cry of delight.

“Here, Pether,” said the woman, “go an’ wash the pot, and bring some clane wather out of the hole—half-full, Pether.”

The urchin darted off.

The man had by this time drawn some turnips out of his other pocket, and handed them to her.

“Yer a good man the day, Pether Kennedy. We have something, at any rate.”

And she busied herself in cutting up the turnips, and having prepared the fowl, put all on the fire, when the boy brought in the pot.

“Tell us, Pether, agra, how did ye get it?” she said, heaping on more turf, and again cowering over the fire.

“Let me alone,” he said, harshly; “ye have it—there; isn’t that enough for ye?”

“Had Rawson no work?” she continued, changing the subject.

"No, he hadn't; yet he tuk in the two Byrnes last week. He gave me a penny, and tould me to go to the poor-house," he added, with a scornful laugh.

"Give us the penny," she whined, coaxingly; "it'll do for male in the mornin'."

He looked at her for a moment.

"It's not worth givin' or houldin'," he said, as he threw it to her.

A noise was heard outside the door.

"Here's the childre," she said. "Let none of yez say what's in the pot."

A little girl entered, hardly better dressed than those before described: a ragged cotton frock, with a dirty handkerchief round her, was her only covering; her age might be eight or twelve; from the emaciated state of her face—unnaturally pale from the glare of a dim rush-light—it was not easy to form an exact idea. Her eyes were blue, her hair light—that colour which deepens to a pretty brown in womanhood.

"Well, Grace, is that you?" said her father—the first uncalled words he had yet spoken.

"Yis, father dear, it's me. Ah, bud it's cowld," she continued, getting between the little ones at the fire.

"Did ye bring nothin' wid ye," cried her mother, sharply.

"It's down the road," she said; "the sack was big, an I got tired, so I left it in the ditch, as I seen the light in the house, an' knew father was here, an' he'd go back an' bring it in."

"That I will, alannah," replied the man, rising. "Whereabouts is it?"

"Just at the ould mile-stone, this side of the bridge, down in the ditch."

It was speedily brought, and the contents emptied on

the floor. Potatoes and skins of the same, the inside wanting though, turnips, cabbage, bones, meal, and rags tumbled out.

"'Haith, Grace, you're a wondher entirely," said her mother, in a tone of commendation.

"Ye've a good dale, Grace, darlint," said her father, half mournfully.

"An' didn't stale a ha'porth there," cried the little girl.

"Ye didn't stale it; an' how did ye get all this?—ye bought them, maybe?" asked her mother, with a sneer.

"No, mother; I went to a big house a long ways off, an' the masther seen me first, an' he brought me in to give me a bit in the kitchen; and thin the mistress gave me the ould duds, an' the servants the rest; an'" —

"An' what?" said her mother, seeing her hesitate.

"An' the little one gev me this," showing a sixpence as she spoke.

The mother snatched it from her.

"Arrah, Grace, bud yer a rale darlint the day."

Her father drew her towards him, and kissed her.

"Ye stole nothin' the day, thin, alannah machree?" he asked.

The girl did not answer; she fixed her large eyes on her father, as if she sought silently to tell him something.

The mother turned round—

"Answer yer father, will ye?—have ye nothin' more?"

The girl drew out of her bosom a handsome cap, all crumpled.

"I stole this," she said.

The mother attempted to take it also.

"I got it as I was goin' up to the big house, on the hedge near the avenue, an' it belongs to thim, an' I am goin' to lave it back to-morrow," said the girl, eagerly.

"Lave it back, indeed!" cried her mother, standing up,

and taking it from her. "A bran new cap, I declare!—the lady's, I'm sure!—lace an' all!—lave it back? Haith, yer no sick fool."

"Ah, mother!" pleaded the little girl, "they're good people—ye wouldn't stale from them yerself; sure they gave me all them; and there was a poor ould man wint up after me, an' maybe they'll think it's him that took it."

"An' let him—who cares?" answered her mother, still examining the cap.

"Ah, mother, darlin'! give it to me, an' I'll bring you somethin' as good; let me give it back to the lady."

"Sorra a fut ye'll go wid it there."

"Ye may as well give the child the cap," said the husband.

"Is it to have me 'rested, an' put in gaol, ye want, Pether? Arrah, man, are ye a fool, at all, at all?"

This silenced him; but the child still importuned for the cap.

"Go along wid ye," said her mother, striking her; "go an' blow the fire, till we ate our supper."

The girl whimpered, and proceeded to her task.

Soon after a lad of thirteen or fourteen came in, with a sack on his back, which he threw on the floor as he came in.

"Well, Mick, acushla, yer welcome. What have ye to night?"

"Faix ye have a bit o' mate, an' some praties and cabbage from ould Worrell's garden."

"An' the mate, Mick, honey, how did ye get it?"

"Oh, give me my supper first, an' thin I'll tell you."

The pot was boiled by this time, or sufficiently so for them, and they took out the fowl, and divided it between the father and mother, and the boy last named, giving a little bit to the girl, to which the father added from his share. The mother gave the little things some turnips,

and told them to roast potatoes for themselves in the ashes.

"Where's Ned, I wondher?" asked the father.

"Bad luck to him," said the mother, "he's always last, and nivir has a ha'porth; and when he does get anything it's into throuble he brings us for it."

"He's so small," urged the girl.

"Arrah don't be talkin'; aint he as big as you?" said the mother, angrily.

The object of the conversation here appeared at the door—a little child of seven or eight years, with only a ragged pair of trowsers and an old shirt on him.

He stood shivering at the door, with a little bag in his hand, empty; one would think he had heard what they said.

"Come in, Ned," said his sister, who first saw him.

"Well," said his mother, savagely, "where's what you got?—where's your bag?"

"I couldn't get anything all day," he whimpered.

"Ye dirty vagabone!" cried his mother, starting up, and cuffing him on the head and ears, "is this the way yer to go on always?" Ye'd rather be fed here for nothin', and do nothin' for yerself; night after night the old story—the empty bag, an' 'I couldn't get anything.' Were ye at Worrell's?" she asked fiercely.

"I was," he sobbed.

"An' ye could get nothin'?" she again asked. "Will ye answer, ye blackguard?" she continued, as the boy cried on.

"We nivir take there," he sobbed again.

"We!" she repeated after him, "an' who's we, ye omedhaun? Have I nivir tould you not? And why don't you take there?" she continued, mimicking him.

"Because," said he again, still sobbing, "they give us our dinner."

'And who's us?"

"Grace an' me,"

'Come, my man, none of yer nice humbug ; out wid and don't dar' come in here without yer share. Come, off."

"Ah, mother!" cried Grace, springing up, "don't ax him go to-night—it's cowld an' wet—don't ax him—sure is small."

"Lave me alone," she cried, her anger rousing her—
e must go. I'll tache him to come in again this way.
t, ye cur!"

"Let him ate a bit first, thin, mother jewel."

"Not a taste, till he brings his bit. Come, out wid
" she shouted.

"Arrah, Katty, can't ye let the child alone," said her
band.

"Hould yer tongue, and ate yer supper," said she ;
nd don't crass me, I'd advise ye."

The poor child still lingered at the door—the mother
hed at him, and he disappeared.

"I'll go wid him," cried Grace, about to follow.

"Will ye?" said her mother, giving her a slap ; "go
down, an' don't stir again widout my lave."

The poor little girl sat down in the chimney-nook,
sing bitterly.

"Sure we had enough widout his share," said the father.
"Much ye know," answered his wife. "Is that the
y ye'd have me bring up the childre, in idleness—walkin'
out all day, an' nothin' home at night. I'll tache them,
l engage."

They finished their meal, and lay down on some straw,
vering themselves with their clothes and rags of blankets.
ey all huddled together—the children at their parents'
t. They slept; Grace was still awake—still crying

within herself. She got up softly, and looked out as pitch, and no sign of her little brother ! She covered the remains of the fire, and every few moments to the door and looked out. Still the absent or not. Grace looked at the wet turf, smouldering by to ashes ; the half-burned sod, growing smaller and smaller crumbling away—a little red here and there, just so how it went ; at last 'twas out, and then a heap in its place—now warm, less warm, cold, and cold at last as cold as the clay floor it rested on. So watched ; and in her grief forgot to keep alive the she had raked up from the ashes ; each one burned away and disappeared ; and so she watched, and was slept.

She dreamt. She thought her little brother in his little bag empty still, but all wet and black ; the running from his hair, and down his cheeks, and necklace little shirt—all wet ; and still he looked at her and She wandered in her dream ; and his darling blue eyes looked into hers, so happily, as they used to do long ago. She wished to speak, but could not ; and still he looked at her so pleasantly ; she tried to get up and go to him, and awoke crying.

He was not there ; but the first dawn of day shone through the little window. She put her hand where the fire had been—all heat gone—the ashes cold as ice. She was very cold herself. She looked out again for no sign yet. “ He'll soon come now,” she thought. Day-light still came on ; the stars one by one went out. She went back to the house—all slept still ; her room was roused up by the draught from the open door, made her to her to shut it, and slept again. Grace closed the

are coming down the road—they walk rather slowly—they are carrying a sack between them ; they get over the ditch, into the bog opposite the hovel ; one of them is young Worrell, and the other his servant-boy.

“ It’s not a sack they have—’tis a boy !—it must be Ned.”

Grace rushed out ; a few bounds brought her to the men—it *was* Ned. Oh ! there was a scream, a long, long, scream, and then another ; and then the pent-up anguish of her soul found vent in tears. It was Ned, poor little Ned ! The men laid him down—he was wet and dirty—his eyes shut—his face wet, and pale, and cold. Poor little boy—he was quite dead. The little girl knelt by his side, held his moist hand so cold, and kissed the dirt from his lips, calling for Ned, “ her brother, alannah machree !” “ her brother jewel !” “ her darling !” but Ned awakened not ; and the men stood by, and wiped the corner of their eyes with their coat sleeves.

The father had come out and the eldest boy ; the former ran up and looked at the corpse—he said nothing ; he raised it in his arms and bore it to the house ; his wife still lay asleep ; he laid the body on the floor.

“ Get up !” he said to her, shaking her arm.

“ Let me alone, will yez ?” she cried, half asleep.

“ Get up !” he said, sternly, taking her in his arms, and putting her in a sitting posture.

“ Arrah, bad luck——” She stopped, her eyes opened. There was the corpse at her feet, and the circle round it in silence. She burst into a loud cry, rocking herself to and fro.

“ We found him in a bog-hole near our house,” said young Worrell, as he went away.

CHAPTER II.

There they were : the father with his arms folded, leaning against the wall near the fire-place, looking with a stare of vacancy in the face of his dead child; the mother still clinging to the bed, whining and rocking herself with her head in her knees : the two younger children kneeling on the straw at the foot of the bed, looking at the corpse : the eldest son leaning against the door-sill, with his hand in his pocket, looking out listlessly on the beautiful morning : and Grace knelt beside the body. She no longer cried aloud, but the tears rolled silently down her cheeks ; the large drops one after another poured from her eyes : she took one hand in hers, and gazed at the little pale face before her ; and then from time to time she put her other hand on his breast, or raised the closed eyelid, and then moved it quickly away, as the dull, cold eye met her view—that eye which used to smile so lovingly on her. Or she would open his lips ; whatever little red was in them once, quite blanched away ; and then another passionate burst of inward grief, as she kissed again and again that dear mouth, never more to press hers in answer. At last the mother looked up.

"What's the girl whinin' for ?" she asked, harshly.
"Will that bring him back ? Arrah, who let the fire out ?"

she continued, looking round at the hearth. "Go along, Grace, and get some kindlin' over at Micky Byrne's; sure we can't stay here in the cowld."

A stifled sob escaped the child; she appeared as if she heard not.

"Will ye go?" said the mother again imperatively. "God knows the little varmint is no loss, anyhow."

Grace, with a scream of agony, threw herself on the body.

"Ah, woman!" said her husband, "howld yer tongue. The poor gossoon's gone; let him lie in pace."

The woman commenced an angry rejoinder, but changed it into her former whine, as a step was heard approaching the door, and a stout, respectable-looking man, followed by young Worrell, passed the boy at the door, and entered the hovel.

"Och! Misther Worrell! Misther Worrell! Misther Worrell!" screamed the woman, rocking herself on the bed—"Och, my poor boy! and he's gone from us, my fair-haired little child! Oh, what'll I do?—what'll I do? Look at him, Mr. Worrell, the little darlint. An' he out lookin' for a bit to ate, the cratur, and niver kem near us, an' we wondherin' what was keepin' him. An' thin, dhrowned in a bog-hole. Oh, wirrasthrue! what'll become of me at all, at all?"

The eyes of the good man addressed were full of tears, as he turned to the father, and said—

"Kennedy, I'm very sorry for you. It's a sad accident; but sure it's the Lord's will. "Mrs. Kennedy," he continued, "don't take on so—be resigned to the will of Providence. It was a poor end for the little fellow. And Grace, dear, you have lost your companion. Send her up, Mrs. Kennedy, in the course of the day, to my wife; I dare say she has something for you."

"Thankee, sir," said the woman. "May the Lord of heaven power a blessing on you and on yer family."

"And Kennedy," continued Mr. Worrell, "you know we must have the coroner here; just form, you know—accidental death, of course. Don't look frightened, Mr. Kennedy; it's only just a form—necessary, though, in a case of this sort. I'm going down to Escar, and I'll mention it to the police there. Maybe the coroner will be here to-day; if not, it will be early in the morning. And you'll want a coffin, too, Kennedy: I'll tell Jem Flynn, as I'm going down, to make one. And Mrs. Kennedy, he added, going, "don't forget to send Grace down to our house."

"May the poor man's blessin' be wid you this day!" said Kennedy, warmly.

"May God's blessin' rest upon you an' yours for ever!" shouted Mrs. Kennedy after him.

As soon as the footsteps were lost leaving the house, she turned to her husband—

"Pether, man, sure you're not goin' to stan' there all day, are ye? Come, start off, agra; go over to Rawson's, an' tell them the story—an' tell it *well*, mind. Ye'll get yer breakfast, anyway, and yer day's work and dinner, too, I'll go bail. We'll not want you at the 'quest. Come, man, go; we've nothin' worth talkin' of for breakfast here, and ye'll be sure to get somethin' there."

The man in silence took his hat, and went slowly out.

"Come, Grace," she resumed, in a milder tone than before, "dart off to Mickey Byrne's for the kindlin.' There, run, and take the pot with you."

As the little girl went, she called her eldest son, and handed him the sixpence that Grace had brought in the night before.

"Here, Mick avourneen, go up to the shop, and buy a

twopenny loaf, a pen'orth of butter, a pen'orth of sugar, three-hap'orth of tay, and a hap'orth of milk ; an' don't hurry yourself too much, 'till I send Grace to Worrell's whin she brings in the fire."

Mick departed, and soon after, Grace came in with the lighted turf in the pot.

"There, that's a girl," said her mother. "Now go up to Mrs. Worrell, and she'll give ye yer breakfast ; an' ask her for a sheet to lay him out wid, an' some candles ; an' may be ye'd get a grain o' tay to watch him by. But hurry up now."

The little girl, subdued and silent, did her bidding.

When she was gone, her mother bustled about, laid the dead boy on the bed in the corner, kindled up the fire, got some water, and put it to boil in the old pot ; took a dirty teapot from a corner, and a broken cup and cracked bowl, and laid them on a three-legged stool, supported on a sod of turf, in front of the fire. The two little children resumed their place in the chimney-nook, following their mother with their eyes, everywhere she turned.

The water boiled as Mick entered.

"Just in time, my darlin', every thing's ready. Where's the tay, 'till I wet it ? Draw the stone over and sit down. Begor that's fine sugar ; but, aisy now, what sort of butter is this ? 'Haith it's half suet. Show us the milk an' the bread ; but it's stale—two day's ould, I'm sure. Here, alannah, take a bit of stick, an' toast a slice. I don't think the stale bread agrees wid me, an' the butter's only middlin'. Make room for the tay-pot, 'till I put it to stew. Now, Mick a hagur, you must mind and say, when the crowner comes here, how that Ned went out in the mornin' to look for his bit, as we were all starvin', and that we didn't see a sight of him 'till they carried him in this mornin'."

"Oh, lave *me* alone," answered the boy, cunningly; "won't I make a movin' story. Am I to cry?"

"Ay, a little, but spake plain at first. But if they go to ask ye too many questions, ye must cry so that ye'll not be able to spake."

"That's enough," said he, winking.

"An' childre," she continued, turning to the little ones, "was Ned here last night?"

"Yes, mother," said they.

"No, he wasn't," she shouted.

"Now answer me, 'Was Ned here last night?'"

"No, he wasn't," said they, hesitatingly.

"When did yez see him last?"

"I seen him —," said Peter.

"Yesturday mornin'," suggested his mother.

"Yesturday mornin'," echoed Peter.

"Come now, say it again. 'When did you see Ned last, Pether?'"

"Yesturday mornin'."

"Katty?"

"Yesturday mornin'," she replied.

"Give us the tay, mother," said Mick, beginning to get tired of the instruction.

So she poured out and tasted it.

"That's raal good, faix," she said, sipping it; "an' I'm expecting Mrs. Worrell will give us some more. Be dad we'll make somethin' by Neddy now that he's dead, more than we did when he was alive, at any rate."

And so the mother and son took their buttered toast and tea, with the drowned son and brother lying beside them! And so they joked upon his death—the mother and son—and she the cause of it! And so they sat by their little fire, eating their comfortable breakfast, having sent out the father and daughter to beg the meal! And

nother catechised the children in lying and dis-, bringing them up as dark spots to taint the fair God's creation !

coroner came, and the police, and the neighbours, . Worrell, with young Worrell, and the labourer ind the body ; after some difficulty they collected

ng Worrell, an intelligent lad of nineteen, was exa- and related that he and a servant boy of his father's identally discovered the body that morning, as they ing to work ; that they had been attracted to the e by the barking of their little dog, who had found

Mick and his mother were sworn, and, with every nce of bitter grief, deposed that the little boy had it to beg on the morning of the day before, and was 1 by any of them till he was brought in lifeless by l.

he jury considered, and agreed, that the child was g home after dark, had mistaken the path, and llen into the hole ; they therefore, after a few ts, returned a verdict of accidental death.

they all went away, and the family were left gain with the corpse. The little children cowered the fire, and Mick stood in the corner of the y-nook. And the mother sat there, her elbows on her knees, and her hands supporting her chin, herself to and fro. And Grace stood in the far crying silently within herself. And the solitary by the wall, shed a dim mournful light through in; and the dead boy lay on the floor where he had- aced for the inquest.

e was the perjured mother that killed her child ; ere, before her other children, had sworn to a lie ;

—the mother that had brought them with pain into world of sin ;—the human mother, placed by the Almighty as the natural guide to lead the offspring on the way to heaven ;—this mother teaching them the path direct to hell ;—the mother, the bane or blessing of the child ; as she is, so will he be.

Grace sat in the corner, still crying ; her mother came up and approached her ; she seized her by the shoulder.

“ Go along,” she said, “ an’ wash that brother of yours bad luck to him, and lay him out, and then put on turnips. Will ye stir ? ” she continued, pushing her. “ Come Mick, agra,” said she, as Grace prepared to do what she told her, “ I’m going out. Will ye come ? ” And wrapping the tattered cloak about her head, she left the house, followed by her eldest boy. Grace washed her little brother, as she had been directed, and laid him out, then lighted the other candle Mrs. Worrell had given her; she afterwards produced a piece of brown bread, which she divided between Peter and Katty; put on the turnips, gave the little things their supper and put them to bed ; they soon went to sleep. She sat by the fire to watch. She was not crying now. She thought where was her father—he was not coming in. He must have fallen into a hole, too. And then she cried. And she thought—where was Ned gone ? —how did Ned die ? Would it not be better for her to go with him, away from trouble ? And she looked over at the dead boy, and cried again. And her eye rested on the two living children, their eyes shut too, lying without noise. And she thought again—were they not all asleep ? and two would awaken but one would sleep on. And so Grace pondered with herself, and cried, and thought, and dozed—then dreamt and woke to cry again.

At last the door was pushed open, and her brother Tom came in, supporting his mother, drunk, hardly able to walk.

"Ye bra—t," she stuttered to Grace; "wha—at are ye d—d—oin' there?" And making a blow at her, she fell on the floor.

Mick lifted her to the bed, and after a few inarticulate words she fell asleep. Mick lay down beside her, and slept too; and the little girl was again alone. Where was her father, she thought—out the whole night. And the wind blew, and the rain pelted against the house, and he came not. Where could he be? And Grace thought on, and cried. The candles burnt down—the wicks grew longer and longer, and the light dim and more dim; and a kind of awe came over Grace. She felt afraid, she knew not of what. She was very sleepy, too; and there was no room for her on the straw. And she went over to her brother, and stooped to kiss him. How cold were the lips! And she lifted the little body over to the fire, took his hand from under the sheet, and clasped it in hers, and nestling down on the hearth beside him, fell asleep—the dead body of her companion—the cold clay giving her confidence in the solitude of night!



CHAPTER III.

THE day was just breaking, when Grace awoke. There was her little brother's ghastly face just beside hers. In spite of herself she shuddered, and let go his hand; but then, as if ashamed, she kissed him again and again.

She replaced the body in the corner, and glanced at the sleepers. All were silent still! She observed something white amongst the straw, near her mother's head; she looked close; it was the cap she had stolen. "Shall I take it?" she thought. She put her hand out—no one stirred—she had it. She opened the door gently, and ran out to hide it under a furze-bush. The children soon awoke; her mother still slept heavily on. There were some turnips left since the night before—she heated them for their breakfast.

Mick took his bag, and went out.

Her mother still slept, and her father came not yet.

And so they waited at the fire. Grace told the children little stories, and they forgot their hunger. And then, as they laughed in their childish glee, she would cry, and point to their dead brother, and they were hushed.

At last her father came; she sprang to meet him, and he stooped and kissed her. A man followed him with a coffin. Grace knew what it was for. She cried again;

Ned was going home. They put him into the coffin—they put on the lid.

“Ah, father, dear!” she cried, rushing to it, “wan look more, just wan.”

She pushed the lid off, knelt down, and kissed his face.

“Ned, honey, you’re goin’; I’ll niver see you again. Ned, achorra, we’ll nivir go out again in the mornin’ to look for a bit to ate. It’s by myself I’ll go now. Ned, darlint, ye’ll lie aisy—won’t ye?” And she smoothed and settled his head. “Och, jewel of my heart, I wish I was wid ye.”

And in a passionate burst of grief she threw herself on the body. Her father lifted her off; the carpenter put on the lid and nailed it; the noise awoke the sleeping mother; she sat upon the bed, and looked on in silence. Her husband approached her.

“Katty,” said he, “I’m in work at Mr. Rawson’s, and here’s somethin’ for you,” handing her sixpence as he spoke.

She took it from him, but answered nothing. Kennedy then with his daughter followed the carpenter and coffin out of the house.

The old churchyard was about a mile away, near Hollywood. They found a little grave dug, and Worrell’s servant standing beside it; a couple of neighbours went with them; the coffin was put in the ground and covered—no burial service for the poor in the Church of Rome—Grace cried in silence. The grave was all filled up; the sods were laid on the top—Ned was gone home.

“Now, Grace,” said her father, “I must go to my work. Go home to yer mother, an’ I’ll bring you somethin’ in the evenin’.”

When Grace returned to the house her mother was not there.

“Pether,” she asked, “where’s mother?”

"Gone to the shop," answered he, "for bread fo
Katty and me is to wait till she comes."

"Wait, then, quiet, like good childre, won't yez
tell mother that I'll be back soon," said Grace.

"Yis, Grace," replied they.

And Grace got the cap she had hid, and started o
the place where she had been two days before. A bi
eyed little girl and smiling boy were playing in fro
the hall-door.

"Oh, Charles!" said the former, "there's the
girl who was here the day before yesterday. She ha
bag to-day."

"Well, little girl," said the boy, addressing her, "do you want?"

"I want to see the mistress, if ye plaze, sir," ans
Grace, curtsying.

"What do you want with her?" asked his compar

"I want to tell her something, Miss."

"But you know you got a great deal here the other
little girl," said the boy, "and you ought not to co
soon again."

"I have somethin' to give her," persisted Grace.

"Children, children!" cried a voice from the hall
which had just opened. "Charles—Jane! come in!
And the lady of the house came out on the steps. "my
little girl, so you want to speak to me. What
you to say?"

"Not to them," said Grace, colouring, and point
the children.

"Children, go into the hall for a moment. Well,
what do you want?"

"You gave me a grate dale, lady, dear, an'—
here's this," she added, bursting into tears, and pullin
cap from her bosom.

The lady took it.

"One of my caps," she said, "that was stolen ! How did you get it?"

"'Twas me, ma'am that took it," said Grace, sobbing.

"And what tempted you to take it? This cap could have been of no use to you if you were hungry."

"Mother 'ud sell it, ma'am. An' 'twas coming to the house, I took it, afore I knewn you; an' I was goin' to put it on the hedge, aither, but there was people lookin', and I couldn't; an' thin I thought it betther to come an' give it to yerself."

"And you came of your own accord?—your mother did not send you?"

"Mother, ma'am! Mother wanted to keep it; but I took it this mornin' whin she was asleep, an' hid it to bring to you."

And the child looked up into the lady's face, and the latter saw truth stamped in the mournful blue eyes that gazed into hers; and a tear quivered on her own eyelash as she turned toward the house, and called her children.

"Come here, Charles and Jane. You see this little girl. She was here the day before yesterday, as you both know, and received a great deal from me. When she was coming to the house on that day, she was tempted to do very wrong—she broke one of God's commands, and stole this cap. She might have kept it without even being suspected of the theft, for we thought that it was the beggarman stole it. Well, this little girl was moved with gratitude towards me, and, of her own accord, brought back the cap to-day. I do not know if she is aware of the great sin of which she has been guilty; but what I wish to call your attention to is, the remembrance of a kindness, and her humility in confessing her fault. Go, my little girl," she continued,

addressing Grace, "go to the kitchen, and I will send you something to eat."

The lady returned to the house with her children, and ringing for the servant, desired him to tell the cook to give the little girl some food, and to let her know when she had finished.

Presently the man entered, saying the girl wanted to go.

"Why, she had not time to eat anything," observed his mistress.

"She hasn't eaten anything, ma'am; she says she wants to take it home."

"Come, children, let us go and speak to her."

They found her in the kitchen, tying up some bones and potatoes in an old handkerchief.

"Why won't you eat anything, my poor girl?" asked the mistress of the house.

"Ah, lady, I'm not hungry, an' it's late, an' far off, an'
— an'—"

And the remembrance of her little brother stole across her mind, and she burst into tears.

"Don't cry, don't cry," said the lady, kindly. "What's the matter?—come, now, tell me."

And the voice of kindness went to her heart—how little she knew it—and she sobbed more bitterly.

"Come, dear, tell me," said the lady more kindly.

Poor Grace!—the good lady called her "dear"—*her*, the poor beggar girl. And the corresponding chord in her own heart, till then untouched, answered the tender word! She screamed, as she threw herself at the lady's feet—"Ned, poor Ned, was drowned yesterday, an'— an'— buried the day." She was choked with sobs. She knelt there—the servants stood round her. There was hardly a dry eye—the children wept bitterly—the good old cook raised her up.

"There, mavourneen, don't take on so. And your brother was drowned, acushla machree? Is there any more of ye?"

"Two little wans," sobbed the girl.

"And, my poor child, you came over here to return my cap on the day your brother was buried," said the lady, actually crying herself.

"Yis, ma'am," answered Grace, not exactly understanding why she should not have come on that account. The poor seldom allow the death of friends to interfere with their occupations.

"Where do you live, and what is your name?"

"Grace Kennedy, ma'am; and I live about four miles from this, beyond Escar, near Mr. Worrell's."

"Margaret," said the lady, addressing her cook, "give her some broken meat and potatoes, and let her go home."

So Grace hurried home, and found her father there, who had just arrived before her. The children had been left all day by themselves, for their mother had not been home at all; and their fire had gone out; and there they cried all day, cold and hungry.

How their eyes glistened when Grace produced her store. She had not touched a bit herself—she waited to eat with them; so she set to work, and warmed some, and the four had a happy, comfortable meal. Mick and his mother arrived late—the latter again drunk. Some brawling and abuse took place, until she was at last persuaded to go to bed. And Grace lay down beside her little brother and sister, and slept more happily than she had done for some time.

To return to the family who had been so kind to her.

The lady whose cap she had returned was wife of Mr. Saunders, agent to a considerable property in the neighbourhood.

Little Grace had excited a warm interest in Mrs. Saunders's heart. The children had become quite fond of her, and eager to learn how her little brother had been drowned.

As the family sat round the fire after dinner, she mentioned the circumstance to her husband.

"I do not think," she continued, "that it was an honest principle which induced her to return the cap, so much as a fine feeling of gratitude, which would not allow her to injure one who had been kind to her; but it is a noble nature on which to graft good principles. Do, dear John, let me try an experiment with that little beggar-girl. Let me take her from her poverty, and bring her up as a servant, and see what that disposition will be with education. The expense will not be great, as she is quite old enough to be useful in many ways in the house."

"Oh, do, papa," cried Jane, "and I will teach her lessons."

"I see no objection to your plan, Ellen, if you wish," answered Mr. Saunders; "but I would recommend you to make more inquiries relative to her parents and their character. Where does she live?"

"Beyond Escar," she said, "near a Mr. Worrell's."

"Oh, I know Worrell very well; he is a most respectable man, and will, I dare say, be able to give us every information. I have some business in Hollywood to-morrow; I will drive you round by Escar, if you wish, and you can ask Worrell all about her."

"That will do exactly, John," said the lady, as she left the dining-room.

The next day was wet, greatly to the disappointment of the children; but the day after, the sun shone out beautifully, and the whole party set out on the car. Mr. Saunders did his business in Hollywood, and then turned to go home by the Escar road. They learned from Mr.

and Mrs. Worrell a full and true account of little Ned's death, and also the cause of it, as appeared on the inquest. Mrs. Worrell was loud in her praise of Grace's disposition, saying what a pity it was that she had such a bad example before her.

"The father's good enough," said her husband, "if he had work, but the mother's a terribly bad woman. It was only the other night—the very night the little boy was buried—that I saw her dead drunk above at the shop."

"Shall we venture to rescue this child from such depravity?" asked Mrs. Saunders of her husband.

"It will be hazardous," he replied. "We can see them, however. Where is their house, Mr. Worrell?"

"Why, sir, it hardly deserves the name of a house. They live in a little hovel about an hundred yards off the road, in on the bog, about a quarter of a mile on the road to Escar. I will go with you and show it."

"Oh, pray do not think of it," said both lady and gentleman; "send a boy with us; it will do quite as well."

"Well, ma'am, if you'll allow me I'll go myself; the boys are all at work, and I've nothing particular to do; and to tell you the truth, I am rejoiced that you are going to do something for our little favourite, Grace, for she has really ideas above the rest."

So they set out towards Kennedy's abode, accompanied by the good-hearted farmer. As he walked by the side of the car, Mrs. Saunders told him how Grace had attracted her notice.

"That is just what I and my wife have observed in her," said Worrell—"a warm affection, and great thankfulness for whatever little kindness is done to her."

They approached the hovel; it was a desolate-looking place: the straight road on for a long way, and on each

side bog and heather; nothing to break the eye but the black turf-clamps here and there.

"That's the house," said Mr. Worrell, pointing in to the right off the road.

"That!" said Mrs. Saunders, as they looked towards what appeared at the distance only a raised bank. "Is it possible that human beings live there?"

Yet so it was. Half stuck against a turf-bank, a little raised above it, were the walls forming the hovel in which the Kennedys dwelt; a hole in the top for a chimney, and the door not above four feet high, with a little hole on one side for a window, the entire not higher than six feet, roofed with large sods taken from the bog; all round the house bleak and cold; hardly a path to it.

"And here live beings such as we are," said Mrs. Saunders, turning with a tearful eye to her husband—"Christians with the same feelings, affections, and perhaps talents that we have, if they were only cultivated; and look—such a wretched, wretched hovel! I could not imagine anything worse; and so dreary and cold all round. Oh, does it not teach us to value what we have, when we not merely think of, but look on the misery of others. Dear John, I should so like to go up to the house."

"My own love, it is very wet and dirty; you would be sure to catch cold."

"But I have strong boots on. Mr. Worrell, could I venture to go to that house?"

"Why, ma'am, it's very wet; but if you were as far as that big stone, there's a sort of a path from that up to the door."

"Come, John, let us try," said the lady, jumping from the car. And she did try, and reached the low door with her husband, and stooping, went in. Grace was sitting at the fire mending something; the children were crouching

over it ; their mother was sleeping on the bed. Grace coloured as she recognised the lady, and stood up, giving her mother a push. Mrs. Saunders looked round in astonishment. The bed of straw, without bed-clothes—the half-dressed woman on it—the naked child beside the fire, and the other hardly better off!—the smoky atmosphere, and the damp floor and walls ! Mr. and Mrs. Saunders looked at each other with looks of pitying commiseration.

“ A nice place you come to, for a servant,” said the former, smiling.

“ Oh, John, John, is it not horrible ? ”

Mrs. Kennedy had by this time roused herself, and stood up.

“ Oh, me lady, an’ I haven’t a chair or a sate to offer ye.”

“ My good woman,” said Mrs. Saunders, “ are you the mother of this little girl ? ” pointing to Grace.

“ Yes, yer ladyship.”

“ Will you allow her to come to my house for a month ; and if I like her, and she proves honest, and obedient, and truthful, I may teach her to be a servant ? ”

“ Oh, I’ll go bail for her bein’ honest, yer honour.”

“ It is because she *honestly* brought me back a cap which she was tempted to steal, that I am induced to take her on trial. Will you allow her to come ? ”

Her mother darted a look at Grace.

“ Ye’ll be givin’ no hire, ma’am ? ” asked Mrs. Kennedy, thinking perhaps of the generally successful foraging of Grace.

“ Oh, come, Ellen,” said Mr. Saunders, going to the door.

“ Oh, mother dear ! —oh, ma’am ! ” cried Grace, springing forward with her hands clasped—“ I don’t want hire ; I’ll go with ye, ma’am dear ; I love ye. Nivir mind mother.”

"I can't take you, though, without your mother's consent; and as I will not undertake to give you any wages, she does not appear to wish you to come."

"Oh, in God's name take her, ma'am," said her mother. "I didn't mean anything whin I spoke of hire. Take her wid ye."

"I am not going to take her now," said Mrs. Saunders, smiling. "I will send for her to-morrow, and my messenger will bring some clothes for her, and then she can give those on her to the poor little children there."

Thus it was arranged. And Grace felt her father's cheek wet with tears as she kissed him, and told him that night when he came home from work. And he hugged his little daughter, and tried to think of some prayer he had been taught in the bright days of childhood, long ago. And he saw a gleam of happiness to cheer him through the dark mist of misery. The next day Grace went to her new home.



CHAPTER IV.

GRACE'S month of trial had expired—a second rolled over, and she was still with Mrs. Saunders, learning something every day, and a favourite with all. Her first friend, the cook, treated her like her own child, and took care to let her want for nothing in the eating way ; and as her business was chiefly in the kitchen, she learned a great deal of cooking ; and the house-maid taught her to sew, and took her up stairs, and showed her how to make the beds and clean the rooms ; and the laundry-maid taught her to wash and make up things ; and William, the butler, used to take her on his knee in the evenings, and hear her say her letters, and tell her stories ; and Miss Jane heard her a lesson every day in the school-room, before her mamma. Grace was by no means a stupid pupil—she had quite learned her alphabet, and was spelling little words. But Jane had hard work teaching her about God and Jesus Christ. It was a long time before she could impress on her mind that “God's eyes were on every place, beholding the evil and the good.” And Jane sometimes got a little impatient with her pupil ; but her mother's clear eye looked over at her, and she checked herself and recommenced again ; and sometimes she wished to go out,

and wanted to put off the instruction till late in the day; but Mrs. Saunders never would allow this. "You have undertaken the education of Grace, my dear Jane, at your own request, and you must attend to it regularly—the lesson will soon cease to be thought of by both you and her, if the hour is optional." And so Grace pursued her studies, loving everybody and loved by all. She was now quite a pretty girl, with nice rosy cheeks, and sweet blue eyes. And Jane taught her prayers, and spoke of Jesus Christ, and how we were to pray to God in His name. Grace, as she took off her clothes at night, and knelt down to offer her little petitions to the Almighty, would think of her father at home, and Peter, and Katty, and wonder had they as good clothes as she had. And then her thoughts came back to where she was, and she prayed God to bless the good lady who gave her all those things. And she would dream that she and Ned were wandering over the country again, and that she was toiling home to the hut on the bog with the bag on her back; and she tripped and fell; then Ned tried to help her up; and she awoke, and found herself in her nice little bed, instead; but poor Ned was gone. And she would cry, and fall asleep again.

Another month rolled over, and Jane was not tired of teaching Grace her lessons. But were all Grace's trials ended? Had she no temptations to resist like other people? Mrs. Saunders allowed her to learn her lessons in the school-room, and write on the slate, which she had just commenced, and sometimes she brought up her work to be taught more regularly than Catherine the house-maid instructed her below stairs. And one day they had all gone out to drive, and she had learned her lesson in the school-room after they went, and written a copy of strokes on the slate. And now she took up her work to go on

hemming a rubber that her mistress had given her as a trial, and after two or three stitches she awkwardly broke her needle. What should she do? Mrs. Saunders always blamed her when she broke her needle—she said it was carelessness. If she could but get another. Oh, there was Miss Jane's work-box on the table. If it was open? She stood up—paused for a second, then went over to the table—stopped again. She tried was it open. It was. Oh, what a pretty looking-glass in the back of it! And Grace looked at the glass, which made it seem ten times more charming. What a nice thimble!—it just fitted her. She had a very ugly thimble compared with it. And a dear little pair of scissors! But where were the needles? She had seen Miss Jane take them out of a little book. Where was it? Ha! there's a little blue ribbon. What is this? And she pulled, and the whole thing came up; and there was the needle-book underneath. She opened it, and got a needle. Ah! Grace! shut the whole thing up now. Do, darling Grace! There's trouble before you, Grace. No! She put the needle-book back. There was something blue in the corner. What is this? She took it up. A nice little blue bag, with bright beads at the ends, and rings on it. Oh, how pretty! and so heavy. What makes it heavy! Poor Grace! And she pulled up the rings, and turned it up; and then shining white money poured into her hand. Sixpences—shillings—and big shillings! She never saw so much before. Now, dear Grace—steady, resist—do not sully your sweet name by taking any. The silver glittered on her palm. All Miss Jane's. So much. She did not know how much. Would Miss Jane miss one little sixpence? And she took one up with her other hand. A little sixpence from so much. She looked at it. *All Miss Jane's Christmas-boxes.* She was keeping it up

to buy something. Miss Jane, her little mistress, who was so good to her. Would she take her sixpence? Miss Jane who taught her, who was her friend, and advised her—Miss Jane who spoke to her of poor Ned, who told her of God and Jesus Christ—Miss Jane who said “God’s eyes are on every place, beholding the evil and the good.” The sixpence dropped back to the rest. Hurrah! hurrah! she conquered. She did not sin—she held the bright jewel of honesty and gratitude still unstained. God keep thee so by *His* grace, my darling child! She took the purse again to put the silver back. But stop. ‘Tis not over yet. A shadow darkened the window of the room, which opened on the grass-plot in front. Grace looked up. Oh! horror of horrors! Her mother looking in at her. Now Grace trembled—now she prayed that the bolt was shot inside—for ‘twas really a door, though like a window. Ah, Grace! your evil genius was near you when you went to look for that needle. There she is. Her mother looking at her. She laid her hand on the door—it opened—she came into the room.

“Haith yer thrivin’, Grace, ahagur, since ye left home—ye’ve med yer fortin, an’ yer countin’ the money. Begorra, it’s quick work wid ye. Maybe ye’d tell us the secret,” she continued, coming towards her stealthily.

“Arrah, don’t be grippin’ it up in yer han’, that a way—show us how much is id?”

“Mother, mother!” whispered Grace, almost choking, “it’s all Miss Jane’s.” And she put her hand behind her.

“Come, be aisy now—an’ if id’s not yours, what is it in yer hand for?”

Grace was pale—she became crimson.

“Show id here,” continued her mother, “sure I’ll not ate it.”

“Ye’ll not take any?” asked Grace, in her innocence.

"Take any?—is id me? Sure hasn't your father plenty now?"

"Well, there," said Grace, stepping back a step, and opening her hand.

"Oh, begorra!" said her mother, peering close, "four half-crowns, and shillins', an'——"

She sprung on Grace, seized her wrist, took the money, and darted from the room. Ah! Grace, what will you do? All's lost now—honour, character, and all!

She was paralysed at first. She stood and gasped at the open window, and then, with a scream, rushed out. Her mother was just entering a shrubbery at the rere of the house. On Grace sped after her. Run, Grace, run—catch the thief—get the money back. Now, Grace—on the shrubbery walk—there she is—speed thee on, child!—'tis for honesty and honour, more than life. The end of the shrubbery—then the field—then the road. As she reached the field, Grace overtook her.

"Mother! mother darlint! yer jokin'. Give it to me—it's not mine—it's Miss Jane's. Mother, give it to me." And she caught her dress, and held her. "Mother mother! give it."

"Let me go," was the fierce answer.

"Give it, mother—give it back."

And still Grace held on. A blow—and she fell insensible. The thief hurried on.

Grace recovered. Where was her mother, and the money? Follow on still. Poor Grace! Still run on—along the road—she is not there—still on. Oh! mother, robbing your young child; stop and give that money to her.

Still on. The dark night came, with the little stars only as guides. Still on—out of breath. There is Escar and the police. Shall she ask did she pass? Oh! no—she is her mother.

Still run on. Turn on the bog-road—darker and darker still—on—on.

The bog on each side—the long, bleak road. She is opposite the old hovcl. There is no light in that direction. How well she knows the path dotted with stones. There was no door to the hut—it was empty. Where were they? Gone! She stopped and sat down in the old home she knew so well, and cried. Where were they all? Mr. Worrell might know. On again.

“Worrell opened his door himself.

“What do you want at this time of night?” he asked.

“It’s Grace, sir—Grace Kennedy.”

“Ah! Grace, is it you? What brings you here, Grace?”

“My mother—I mean, where is my father livin’?”

“Sure he’s got a house from Mr. Rawson, and is living there. But come in to the fire, Grace, ‘dear.’”

“Oh! no, sir, I can’t. But tell me, where’s the house?”

“The second house up the boreen, on the left hand side, as you pass Mr. Rawson’s big white gate.”

“Oh! thank you, sir.”

And Grace vanisbed. She found the house, and knocked.

“Does Peter Kennedy live here?” she inquired, as a voice asked who was there.

“Yis,” was the answer.

The door opened, and she was in her father’s arms.

“Is mother here?” she asked.

“No, alannah, she’s not. Come to the fire, acushla. Bud yer could. Here, Mick, get up an’ light the candle. There now, warm yourself. Alannah machree, what makes ye cry? Will ye ate anythin’?”

“No, father, dear.”

“Well, come tell us —”

“When will mother come in?”

"Oh ! sometimes she doesn't come in at all—sometimes later nor this; she does be out often for two or three days together."

"I want to spake to her."

"Well, darlint, lie down on the childer's bed, and I'll wake ye whin she comes in."

And after some persuasion, Grace lay down and slept.



CHAPTER V.

WHAT trouble there was at Fairport when they came home from driving. Jane took off her things, and went to the school-room for her work-box. There it was, the tray on one side, the box open, and the blue purse empty. All the little savings gone. Her Christmas-boxes and presents, that she kept so safely, storing up each penny from day to day to buy a frock for her pupil when she was able to read—all gone! Ah! good Jane. Pity for Jane. Her sweet castle, furnished with good intents and rich rewards, fallen to the ground. Unhappy Jane! And she sat down to cry.

And as she delayed with her work, Mrs. Saunders came to look for her. There she was, sobbing in the dark.

“Jane, my love, what’s the matter?” asked her mother.

“It’s all gone, mamma—all the money’s gone.”

“What money, dear?”

“My money—four half-crowns, eight shillings, and five sixpences.”

“Your money!” repeated Mrs. Saunders, and rang the bell to call for a candle.

The light was brought. There it was—the tossed work-box, the empty purse, and the open window. The money was gone!

"Call Mr. Saunders," said the lady.

And he came and saw the scattered things.

"William," he said, "collect the servants; do not let ~~any~~ leave the house."

And they all came—only one was missing.

"Where was Grace?" Silent all.

"Call Grace," said Mrs. Saunders, gently. Silence still.

"She's not in the house, ma'am," said William, sorrowfully.

"The last time I saw her was going to say her task to Miss Jane," said Catherine.

"I told her to stay here and learn her lesson, and write," sobbed Jane.

"It was Grace took the money," said Mr. Saunders, after a pause. "I'm sorry for it. You may go down stairs," he said, addressing the servants. "Ellen, dear, your experiment has signally failed. Jane, pet, don't cry; how much did you lose?"

"Four half-crowns, eight shillings, and five sixpences," said Jane, still crying.

"A pound and sixpence altogether," said her father, "which I shall give you. So don't cry any more."

"William, send down to the police-sergeant at Escar to say that I would be glad to speak to him."

"Oh! papa, pray don't punish her," cried Jane. "Maybe she'll bring it back; she was tempted, I'm sure. Oh! don't tell the police."

"Jane," answered her father, "when people do wrong, we ought to prevent others from following their example; but punishment is another question in this case. We must try and recover the money."

There was grief and heart-burning at Fairport that evening. Mrs. Saunders was sorry that her *protégé* had so completely disappointed her hopes.

Jane would have given twice as much as she lost to have her forgiven and back again; and she cried at intervals till she went to bed, to think of her taking it when she was saving it up to buy a frock, and bonnet, and cape, for Grace herself. And Charles sympathized with his sister.

The servants one and all grieved for her and pitied her; and various were the comments and conjectures among them after they went down stairs. She had not even taken her bonnet, nor any of her clothes but those on her. Was it not an extraordinary thing?

The police-constable came, and Mr. Saunders had him in the hall to speak with him.

"Why, sir, a girl such as you describe ran by the barrack to-day about half-past four. I did not see her, but I heard one of the men speak of it. 'She had no bonnet on?'"

"Of that I'm not sure," answered the gentleman. "I will call the house-maid, and will learn how she was dressed."

So Catherine was unwillingly obliged to describe her dress, and poor Jane herself had to come and assist in the description.

"It is likely, from what you tell me, Dalton," continued Mr. Saunders, "that she is at her old home or near it; so you will have the goodness to make inquiry, and let me know the result as soon as you can."

"Will your swear informations, sir?"

"No, not yet. I am in hopes that if you find the girl, you will get the money also, and in that case I should not be inclined to prosecute."

And the policeman took his leave.

Very early the next morning Grace awoke. Such *dreams* as she had. There was Miss Jane crying, and

asking why did she take the money; and there Mrs. Saunders looking so mournfully at her. Then it changed to Ned, and the little pale face as she saw him last; and then her mother, with her furious look, as she struck her down. And Grace awoke, crying bitterly. Her father was up; he had lighted a candle, and was kindling the fire. Grace got up at once, and dressed herself.

"Ah! acushla, is that you?" he asked. "I was just goin' to call you. What moanin' an' cryin' ye kept all night, alannah machree. Come over here to the fire, darlin' an' take this sup of warm milk, an' tell me all; they're asleep now, an' none to listen."

And the father and daughter sat down by the little fire, the father supplying the mother's place in listening to the outpourings of a daughter's sorrowful heart—the father administering the sweet, kind words of comfort to the mourner's ear, that a mother's tender voice ought to have uttered. And so, with his arm round her neck, and hers round his waist, she told her tale. He groaned, he clenched his hand, his teeth ground together—

"She struck ye?" he cried, starting up as she finished; "struck ye like a dumb baste! An' was it to rob and ruin ye that she took the stranger's money? Grace," he continued, after a pause, "I must go to my work; I have all the cattle to mind at Mr. Rawson's, and it wouldn't do to be late. Wait here, jewel, till evenin'; maybe she'll bring it here, or lave it back at the house." Poor Kennedy felt, as he spoke it, that it was a false hope.. "And I'll get lave from Mr. Rawson, who's a good man to me, God bless him, to come here an hour before dark, and we'll go over to Mr. Saunders's. Get the childher's breakfast for them whin they wake, Grace ahagur, an' don't fret; sure ye're not in fault."

And he left the cottage.

Ah ! Grace, my poor girl, your troubles are not over yet; still the clouds of sorrow are gathering more gloomily over you, and a heavy shower of bitterness is about to fall.

The breakfast was over, and Mick was gone, and Grace had got a needle, and was mending her little sister's frock—her old one—and she was talking to the little things as Miss Jane used to do with her, and told them little stories, and was just in the middle of one, when a voice behind her at the door asked—

"Is this Peter Kennedy's house?"

And Grace turned round, and let fall her work, as a policeman entered.

Grace dropped her work.

"Ho ! ho !" said the policeman, "there you are, quite comfortable. Here she is, Dobbin," he continued, calling to a companion outside ; and both came into the house.

Grace's cheeks tingled—her heart swelled to bursting. She looked down ; she could not speak ; she knew why they were come. They mistook her confusion for that caused by guilt.

"You're a nice one, aren't you, to go rob your mistress, after her bein' so good to you ?"

Grace found words—

"I didn't rob her," she said, passionately.

"Oh, no ; you only took a loan of it, I suppose. Well, I'll trouble you to hand it back, at all events. Come, Dobbin, search the house and beds, while I try her and the young ones."

To no purpose, of course, was the search.

"Come, lass," said he, "you must tramp with us."

"Oh, I didn't take it," she cried, "it was"—

She stopped, and thought of her mother. Should she tell of her own mother ? She was bad to her, surely, but

ill her mother. She would go to gaol if she told, and
en who would take care of Peter and Katty? Her
ther would make her give it back. She would not tell
at her mother took it. This resolution strengthened her,
d gave her courage. She prepared to accompany the
licemen.

They brought her first to the barracks at Escar, and
e of them, with the sergeant, conducted her thence to
r. Saunders's. William opened the door; his eyes filled
th tears as he saw Grace thus guarded.

"Ah, my poor Grace!" he said.

"Tell your master," said the sergeant, "that we're here." And Mr. Saunders came out. Grace, in her resolve not
tell, became quite calm. The police thought it was
leness; so did Mr. Saunders.

"We have her, sir," said the police, touching their
ps. "Jackson and Dobbin found her in her father's
use; they searched her, and the house, but could not
d the money. And she won't say anything; she's quite
gged."

"So I perceive," said Mr. Saunders, as the police stepped
to the hall with their prisoner. "I am very sorry to see
; we shall make her speak, I dare say."

And the servants stole up to look at their favourite.

"The cratur!" said Margaret.

"Poor little thing!" said Catherine.

William said nothing; he was afraid he would cry. He
ought of his own little daughter at home. The door
om the school-room opened, and Mrs. Saunders and the
ildren appeared. Grace looked up; the lady advanced
wards her.

"Grace," she said, sorrowfully, "how could you do this
hen we were so kind to you? Had you not enough;
id from Miss Jane, too, who taught you your lessons?"

Grace looked up again. The large, silent tear-drops were rolling down Jane's cheek. The eyes of the two little girls met. Grace lost herself. She ran to her, knelt down at her feet, took her hand, kissed it again and again, and sobbed forth—

"I didn't, Miss Jane; I didn't, indeed. Don't cry, darlin' Miss Jane; we'll get it back again, maybe; but I didn't take it. Sure I wouldn't stale now, an' sure I wouldn't stale from you?"

And Grace knelt at Jane's feet, and wept. The servant-women put their aprons to their eyes.

"I knew she didn't," said the cook.

William turned down stairs to cry in the pantry. Jane stooped over the kneeling girl, and, holding her hand, cried with her. Mrs. Saunders herself was moved. Her husband was of sterner mould.

"Come away, Jane," he said, taking his daughter's hand. "Well, Grace," he asked, "if you did not take the money, who did? You were the only one in the school-room yesterday while your mistress was out; and if you did not take it, why did you run away?"

Grace wept still in silence, and answered not.

"You know something about the money, I dare say," he continued. "Give it back, and in consideration of your youth, I shall let the matter drop; but if you don't restore the money, or tell where it may be found, I must send you to prison."

Grace cried afresh.

"I don't know where it is," she sobbed; "I wish I did."

"If you don't tell something more about it, I must swear informations against you, and send you to M— Gaol," again reiterated Mr. Saunders.

There was no answer—a pause.

"Grace, will you not say anything?" asked Mrs. Saunders.

"I can't, ma'am; I didn't take it."

"But you know; if you want us to believe you, you must tell something more than that."

"Oh, come," said Mr. Saunders, hastily, "I'll ride over to Hamilton's, and get the warrant for her committal."

"Ah, wait," said his wife, "perhaps she'll tell."

"Oh, ma'am," said Dalton, the policeman, "there's no use; she's made up her mind badly, and doesn't know what's for her good. A few nights in the gaol will bring her to her senses; and you know, ma'am, Mr. Saunders need not prosecute if he does not like; and it's a long way to M——, so the men ought by right to start now, to be back before night."

"Well, Grace, once more," said Mr. Saunders, "will you tell where you have hid the money?"

She only answered by tears.

"Do tell, Grace," said her mistress.

"I can't, ma'am; I don't know where it is."

"That will do," said the gentleman. "Dalton, will you have her sent to Mr. Hamilton's, and I will go over to get the warrant."

And Grace trudged along the weary road to gaol, the long road she never was on before; and a policeman marched on each side of her, with a gun and bayonet. And Grace smiled within herself. She walked on with a lighter step—she felt she did not take it. She felt proud as she thought that she bore another's guilt; that Katty and Peter would not be left alone, and that her father would have somebody to get his dinner for him.

It was three o'clock when they entered M——. She was very tired; and the people looked out at the tall policemen and the little child, as they passed along the

town. And the boys left their play to follow them ; but there was no hooting, not even a laugh ; they all pitied. The thoughtless boys felt for the pretty, golden-haired girl—for her bonnet was forgotten, and her light-brown ringlets floated in the wind. The little girls longed to go up and ask her what she had done. And the good mothers sighed as they thought of one so young in sin.

They came to the large, black-looking gaol, with ugly railing over the huge door ; the bell was rung, the warrant of committal handed in, and Grace after it, and the wicket-door was shut again. Grace was in gaol.



CHAPTER VI.

DOOR Kennedy! He got permission from his master to leave work earlier than usual. Another man took place with the cattle. And he hurried home.

"I'll right her," he said, as he went along. "We'll go Mr. Saunders's. Two hours there and two back. I'll back by eight o'clock."

And so he came to the house.

"Where's Grace?" he asked.

The little things could only tell him that two men came her, and she went with them.

"Was yer mother here?" he asked.

"No, daddy, an' we're very hungry."

He hurriedly got something to eat for the little creatures. rely, he thought, Mr. Saunders sent for Grace. Then ling the children to go to bed when they had eaten their proper, he went out. A neighbour's wife was washing a t before her doór, a little lower down the lane.

"Tell us, Biddy," he asked, "did you see two men in' to my house the day?"

"Faix I did, Pether a-hagur, an' I seen them goin' ay too."

"Grace was with them, was she?"

"Yer daughter, ye mane," said the woman, coldly; haith she was."

"What is id ye mane at all, Biddy achora?"

"They was polismen that was with yer daughter, Pether, agra," answered the woman, raising herself up, and standing before him.

"Polis!" he shrieked, "polis!" and ran off. "Och, she's taken, the innocent cratur;" and he ran. "They wouldn't believe her. But where am I runnin' to?"

He turned back to the woman.

"Was it the Escar polis was in id?" he asked.

"Jist thim," was the answer.

"An' what time, Biddy honey?"

"About eleven o'clock this mornin'."

"Oh, she's in gaol by this," he said, as he turned away. "I'll clear her, though, to her mistress, the kind lady; I'll prove her innocent, the darlint. I'll have the other one taken." And on he sped to Escar.

He could not walk—he ran. There's Mr. Worrell's—on to the bog road; there's his old house. He stops to breathe. He thinks of Grace in prison. On again—on, on, over the bog road. He did not feel the cold wind and the spitting rain beating against his face—Grace is in prison. He heeds not the sharp, rough stones he trips against in his haste—Grace is in prison. On, on, still. Here's the bridge, and the end of the bog road. On, up the hill to the barrack. He rushes in.

"What made ye take Grace?" he asked, hardly able to speak from want of breath.

"Who are ye at all?" asked the sergeant, standing up.

"Ye took her presner to-day, didn't yez?" he asked.

"Took who prisoner?"

"Grace Kennedy, that was livin' at Mrs. Saunders's."

"Yes, we did; these two men are just after leaving her in the gaol."

"Oh, my God iv Heaven!"—sitting down, and covering

his face with his hands—and then he started up—"she didn't take it—'twas her mother; her mother forced it from her. Go, 'rest her, I tell yez. Put *her* in gaol—my wife, Katty Kennedy. Take her up, and let the innocent darlint go."

"The man's mad," said the police.

"I'm not mad. I tell yez it was Katty Kennedy took the money for dhrink, and ye'll find her now in Philips-town, or Hollywood, or somewhere, dhrunk."

"I think we'll have to arrest you, too," said the sergeant, "as you know so much about the matter."

"Och, 'rest me if yez like; but let me go up to the good lady, Mrs. Saunders, and clear Grace."

"I'll take you there myself. Come along."

He told his story by the way—they were brought into the hall; and the policeman told the servant that he had learned something more about the money.

Mr. Saunders was at dinner; but he and all the family came out.

"Och, ma'am, ye sent her to gaol," commenced Kennedy, in a piteous tone—"och, ye sent her to gaol, an' she innocent. The poor child. She never took it, ma'am, dear; she never took it."

"What is all this?" asked Mr. Saunders. "Dalton, who is this man?"

"The girl's father, sir, at whose house the men found her this morning."

"My good man," said Mrs. Saunders, approaching Kennedy, "do you really mean to say that she is innocent?"

"I do, me lady. God knows she is. It was her mother took the money; and the darlint thought how she'd be punished if she tould; so she wouldn't peach, an' is gone to prison herself, instead. That's the only raison I can think of for her not tellin' at onst, as she told me this mornin'?"

"What did she tell you?"

"Why, yer ladyship, she said she was in the room, an' the young lady's work-box was open; an' Grace, the cratur', was looking for a needle, or somethin' in it; an' her mother came in by the window, and took the money out of the child's hand by force; an' Grace follyed her, and overtook her, and wanted to hould her; but the mother turned and struck her down, and darted off. Thin Grace got up, and follyed on, but lost her, and came to my house wet and cowld, to thry if she was there. An' that's the story, ma'am; an' I had to go to my work this mornin', and I saw she was loath to come back here by herself; so I told her to wait till evenin' an' I'd go wid her; an' I got lave from my masther to quit work early, and whin I came to the cabin she was gone. The polis had her, and then I ran on here, an' now she's in gaol."

And poor Kennedy's voice faltered through his tale, and at the end he fairly cried.

"Ah, John, you were too hasty. If I had spoken to her myself, she would have told me, I am sure," whispered his lady, sorrowfully.

"There is one point in your story that I do not understand," said Mr. Saunders, addressing the man. "You say that the woman forced the money out of the child's hand. Now, how came it in her hand?"

"Ah! the cratur took it up to look at it, I suppose, yer honour."

"Jane, my love, was not your money in the purse?"

"Yes, papa, in a corner of the workbox.

"So, you see, my man, that your daughter must first have taken the money out of the purse into her own hand, before it could be forced from it."

"Ah, sir, I'm not sure what she did; but wan thing I'm sartin of, that she nivir thought of takin' the money, an' nivir did."

"Don't you think, sir, it would be advisable to detain this man," asked the policeman.

"Why, there is no evidence whatever against him, Dalton, even by any accidental admission of his own. I don't see how you can keep him."

"Oh! don't go for to keep me, gentlemen, for the love iv heaven, or I'll lose my place ; and Mr Rawson's a good man, an' I'll get lave from him to come to-morrow ; but who'd foddher the cows in the mornin' if I'm away. I'll do all I can for yez, to get the colleen out o' gaol, but don't keep me. There's two little wans at home, and maybe it's the house they have set a-fire. Don't keep me. Sure, I wouldn't have come to the polis at all, if I had any hand in it. An' I'll find Katty, too, I'll go bail."

"Well, sir," said Dalton, "I think I had better take him up to Mr. Hamilton's, and get a warrant for the apprehension of the woman he speaks of, on his testimony in the case."

And they went to the magistrate's—the husband to give evidence against the wife, to save the child.

"Can we not get Grace out of prison now, dear?" asked Mrs. Saunders to her husband, as they returned to the dinner-table.

"Why, I don't know ; she has been certainly to blame, according to her father's account, in going to the work-box at all, and then taking the money out. I wish you would see her, my love, and try if her version corresponds with what her father says. You have no objection to visit the gaol?"

"Oh, not the least," answered the lady ; "only too happy, if I can be of any service to poor Grace, who I really hope is innocent. Can we not get her out?"

"I should not like to withdraw my informations, particularly as the mother has not yet been taken ; and the girl

may be the guilty party, after all. If you think well of her tale to-morrow, I may endeavour to get her out on bail; but you know, Ellen, it would not do to bring her here, as long as the shadow of a doubt rested on her."

"Where could we put her?" said his wife, half to herself.

"Let her go home, can't she—the fittest place for her."

"Oh, John, how can you say that—home!—to that wretched hovel in the bog!"—for Mrs. Saunders was not aware of Kennedy's change of residence. "And what good has she learned in that house that we should send her there?"

"The old school-mistress wants a servant, I think," whispered Jane.

"Thank you, darling, for the hint; yes, that will just do," said her mother. "She can stay at the school, and attend to her lessons, till she can come back here with a character unstained."

Next day Mrs. Saunders, with her husband, drove to the gaol.

They were shown into the governor's parlour, and he himself soon appeared.

"Mr. Denny," said the gentleman, "we would be glad to see a little prisoner that was brought to you yesterday."

"I know, sir, a little light-haired child, about twelve years old—her name was Grace—Grace —"

"Kennedy," suggested Mr. Saunders.

"Exactly, sir—Kennedy—charged with robbing her mistress. Well, sir, she is in the house here. My wife, on seeing her, took quite a fancy to her. She was tired, poor thing, and hungry, when she came in, and she was

taken down to the kitchen to eat something, and there she so won on my wife, good woman, that she declared she would not send her among the other prisoners, but would keep her herself to assist in the house. Poor little thing, she is very unhappy."

"Poor child," said Mrs. Saunders, "I should be glad to speak to her, alone, Mr. Denny, if it were perfectly convenient."

"Oh, certainly, ma'am, if you will step up to the drawing-room."

"I will walk round the prison with you, if you will allow me, Mr. Denny," interrupted Mr. Saunders, "and the little girl can come in here."

"Very well, sir, exactly;" and they both left the room. "Will you wait here, sir, for a moment, 'till I call her?"

Grace came up at the summons that some one wanted to speak to her.

And she entered the room, and there was her mistress. She jumped forward with delight, but stopped and crimsoned—she recollects where she was, and she looked down.

"Grace," said her mistress, "come here and sit down beside me. Now, Grace, why did you not tell me yesterday, what your father has told me about the money; you would not have come here, then, perhaps?" And the soft, gentle tone went to her heart, and she burst into tears.

"I'm sorry, father told," she said, at length.

"Why should you be sorry, if he told the truth?"

"Sure I didn't tell a lie, ma'am, dear?"

"I'm not saying you did; but you kept back part of the truth, and that was nearly as bad."

"Was that as bad? but sure—"

"But sure, what?"

"Is'nt there a great punishment for robbin', ma'am?"

"I believe the punishment is heavy; but what has that to say to it?"

"If I told, she'd suffer, ma'am," said Grace, with tearful eye, looking up to her mistress.

"Who is 'she'? Come, go on Grace; tell me everything. I know all, but I want to hear it from yourself. You were going to take the money yourself, were you not?"

"Oh no, ma'am—indeed, indeed, no. I thought at first that a little sixpence would not be missed, and the devil put that into my head; but I thought then that God was looking at me, as you and Miss Jane often told me, and I put the bad thought away."

"How came you to touch the money at all, Grace?"

"My needle broke ma'am, and I knew you'd be angry with me; and I saw Miss Jane's work-box, and tried was it open—I know I did very wrong—and it was; and I found the needle-book in the bottom, and took one. An' then I saw the little bag, an' took out the money, an' had it in my hand, whin mother came to the glass door—oh, I got such a fright, ma'am—and she came in an' coaxed herself over to me, and made a snatch at the money, and ran away. I followed her, and caught her just in the shrubbery, and she turned round and hit me here, ma'am," (and there was the mark on her temple,) "and I fell; and whin I got up I ran on to father's, thinkin' she was there, but she wasn't. Thin I felt that you'd think that I took it, an' father said he'd come over with me himself after work. Thin the polis came, an' I didn't like that mother should be taken—what id Katty and Pether do? an' she'd be hung, maybe, an' go to the bad place for wicked people—."

"And is that all, Grace—the whole truth?"

"Indeed it is, ma'am." And her mistress read in the watery blue eye the bright glance of truth.

"Well, Grace, in the first place, it was awkward of you to break your needle; but there was no *sin* in that; it became *sin* when you went to *take one of Miss Jane's*, which was not yours—it was then the sin of *stealing*; for, as far as the sin goes, it is as great wrong before God to take a needle belonging to another as a pound. You stole a needle, and as you were engaged in the theft your curiosity was excited, and you were very near stealing money also. Your mother came, and actually took the money, the consequence, I may say, of your theft; for if you had not opened the work-box to *steal* the needle, you would not have seen the money—you would not then have had it in your hand when your mother came to the window—and she would not have been tempted to take it. You have partly atoned for your fault by being sorry for it. But do not think the *wrong* consisted in going to Miss Jane's work-box, and opening it; that *was* certainly very wrong, idle curiosity; but the sin was in opening it to steal. Do you understand all I have said?"

"Oh yes, ma'am," replied Grace, sobbing, "I did steal the needle—I'm very sorry—an' I must stay here with mother; but, ma'am dear, did she give back the money?"

"She has not been heard of yet at all. But would you like to come away from this, if I could get you out?"

"Oh, ma'am dear, you're so good un' kind to poor me;" and Grace cried on.

"I must leave now," said Mrs. Saunders, rising. "You had better go down stairs again."

"Amn't I to go with you ma'am?"

"No, Grace, I must speak to Mr. Saunders about it; perhaps to-morrow or the day after you will come out.

But, Grace, though I believe that you did not take the money, there are others who think you did ; so until your mother is taken and tried you shall stay at the school and learn your lessons. And if you are let out of this, you must promise not to run away or hide yourself anywhere."

"Oh, that I will, ma'am." And Mrs. Saunders held out her hand, and Grace took it in both hers, and looked as if she would have liked to kiss her mistress.

"Good-bye, Grace," said her mistress, as they parted outside the door.

"Good-bye, ma'am," said Grace, curtseying.

Mrs. Saunders spoke to her husband, and he arranged with Mr. Hamilton, and the little girl in two days was let out on bail. Mrs. Denny was very sorry to lose her ; the blue-eyed child had won a little spot in the good woman's heart.

But were they not glad at Fairport ? Poor Jane was wild with joy—the connecting link of gratitude between her and her humble pupil was not broken ; and Charles was very happy too.

And William, the butler, shut himself up in the pantry for a whole hour, and the cook afterwards declared that she heard him crying and " thanking God."

And Catherine did nothing but laugh ; and the cook said "she knew it all along," and that "she'd go and bring her back, the cratur'." And she did go. She told her mistress that she had important business in M——, it couldn't be put off ; "an' wouldn't the master lend the ass's cart, and then she could bring home poor Grace." And her mistress smiled, and said she might go. And William suddenly recollect ed that he had not a single good boot or shoe in the world, and asked leave to drive the cart.

They came to the gaol ; and there was her father

standing at the gate. He heard from the Escar police that she was coming out, and he came to bring her home. Mr. Rawson gave him the day—another man “foddhered” the cattle. “His darlint—he knew he’d clear her.” And out she came; she had her bonnet now; and her father hugged her, and William and the cook kissed her, and they got on the cart—Grace between the two servants—and her father sitting behind, with his legs hanging down. And on the donkey went full trot—William could manage him well—on they went through the town; and the little boys recognised the golden-haired little girl going home; and they ran after the cart and cheered;—“Hurrah! hurrah! she’s out! she’s out!” How well the donkey went; he actually cantered; and the little boys cheered: it was quite a triumph. On they went home—good donkey!—and Peter’s legs dangled behind; and he whistled some curious tune. On they went, and they were all so merry. But who are these on before? They come closer; they are like police. Closer still—two policemen holding a woman between them, and dragging her along—it is her mother. Grace felt quite sick; her mother going to gaol—the same police that took her. “Oh! do stop, William.” And Peter looked round, but still he whistled his old tune, and the police stopped.

“She’s dead drunk,” said Dobbin, “and won’t walk a step; we’re killed dragging her. You’re clear at all events,” said he, addressing Grace; (poor Grace was sobbing bitterly;) “we found silver on her, and Miss Jane Saunders knew it to be her’s.”

“I knew I’d clear her,” said Peter, behind.

The drunken woman looked up.

“Grace,” she stuttered.

“Mother, mother,” sobbed Grace.

“Ye — — —, may the curse iv” —

But Peter's hand was on her mouth, and he stooped down and whispered in her ear, and the drunken woman sunk down in silence. He jumped on the cart again; "Go an now." And on they went home.



CHAPTER VII.

GRACE went home with her father that night to Katty and Peter. Oh, weren't they glad to see her! But here was a great deal of sorrow in Grace's cup of joy. She thought of her mother in prison, and how she had cursed her.

"I must stay with you now, father dear."

"An' why, alannah? Didn't the lady say ye might go back to the big house now that ye war clear?"

"I know she did; but, father, who'll dress yer victuals, and take care of the children?"

"Niver mind me; an' sure the childre won't be worse off than they ever wor."

"But, father dear, sure there's no one now?"

"Nivir you mind, acushla; go back to yer mistress, like a good girl, to-morrow, as she towld ye; an' I'll think, an' maybe I'd manage; an' I'll go over an' see you on Sunday, plaze God; an' Biddy Hoolagan will have an eye to the childhre till then."

Grace started the next morning back to Fairport, and told her dilemma.

"Father wishes me to stay here, ma'am; but who'll mind the children?"

"I quite agree with your father," said Mrs. Saunders;

"but I will talk over the matter with the master, and speak to your father when he comes on Sunday."

And she told her husband.

"What can be done?" she asked.

"I don't know anything else," said he, "except to give him work here. I think he's an honest man, and would have no objection to employ him."

"Oh, that will do exactly; and the children can all go to school."

"But you know, my dear, I cannot take him from Rawson; that is, I cannot offer him work so as to induce him to leave his present employment. Dunne, the herd, will be leaving me in a fortnight, and if Kennedy knows anything of cattle, as I think he does, that would suit him; and there's a house, too."

So there was Kennedy as they drove home from church on Sunday. He took off his hat, and approached them.

"Put on your hat, my man," said Mr. Saunders.

"Grace, ma'am," he began, "is very anxious to come home and tache the childhre, and mind them; bud I'm thinkin' that it's betther for her to stay here in a good place an' larn herself. An' I'm goin' to make so bowld as to ax yer honour if I might put the little childhre to lodge with some of the neighbours here, and thin they'd be near Grace, and could go to the school; an' may be, in coorse of time, I'd get work about here myself."

"Would you wish for work in this neighbourhood, my friend?" asked Mrs. Saunders.

"Oh! yes, ma'am; sure that id jist do."

"Do you know anything of the management of black cattle?" inquired the gentleman.

"Is it cattle, sir? sure that's what I'm at all my life; it's herd I am at Mr. Rawson's beyant. The cows, the craturs!"

"Well, my herd is going away in a fortnight, and if you wish for work in this neighbourhood, I'll give you the situation. There is a house, garden, and milk, and seven shillings a-week, to be increased if you go on well."

And the hat was off again.

"May God bless you an' yer good lady, sir. I'll ax Mr. Rawson, sir, whin he could let me go, for he's a good man, an' I wouldn't take him short; an' I'll tell ye, sir, this day week."

It was all arranged, and in a fortnight they took possession of their new abode.

"Your children will all go to school to-morrow, Kennedy, I hope," said Mrs. Saunders, on the evening he arrived.

"Oh, yis, ma'am, sartinly; the craturs must have the edication."

"Are you a Roman Catholic?"

"Why, ma'am," said Kennedy, approaching her, "by rights I ought to be a Protestant; an' if I know any religion it's that. My father was a Catholic sartinly, but my mother, and all belongin' to her, were raal Protestants. An' she used to be tachin' us when we were young; an' I'm sure that I was christened by the minister, an' often went to the church. Well, mother died an' we all young, an' father didn't care much what we wor; an' the neighbours strove to make us go to chapel, an' they brought the eldest sister, but me an' the boys ran wild; an' any prayers I know are all Protestant."

"Perhaps you could say one for me?" asked Mrs. Saunders, anxious to test the truth of his assertion, for she had a great horror of appearing to buy converts.

"Let me think, ma'am. Oh, here's wan—'O Almighty God, unto whom all hearts are open, all our desires known, an' from whom no secrets are hid, cleanse the bad thoughts

of our hearts by the Holy Spirit, so that we'll love you always, through Jasus Christ our Lord. Amin."

"That is certainly one of our most beautiful prayers," said the lady, solemnly; "and you had a good mother to teach you to pray to God, to make clean the thoughts of your heart. And about the children, Kennedy?"

"Sure, ma'am, they don't know a hap'orth about God Almighty—an' though Katty was a Roman, ma'am, she never throublied her head much about religion, except to take them to the priest to be christened. Sure she had no religion, an' I think the Protestant's the best."

"And it's your wish that your children should be brought up in that faith?"

"It is, ma'am, if you plaze, wid the help of God."

"But about Grace?" continued the lady, "she has been looked upon here as a Roman Catholic, and has gone to chapel with the cook."

"Oh, it's no matter about Grace, ma'am."

"No matter?" said Mrs. Saunders, somewhat astounded.

"That is, ma'am—I mane, ye may make her what ye like. Be right, I've no call to her." And he came closer. "She's a fondlin', ma'am. But for the love of God, don't tell her that, ma'am. Sure ye needn't tell any wan. She thinks she's ours—an' I'm twice as fond of her as if she was. An' if she knew she wasn't, maybe she wouldn't love her poor father as well as she does. Tache her, yerself, ma'am. I'll be bound ye'll make her a good Christian; but don't tell her that."

"And how did you get her?" asked the lady, eagerly.

"A poor strange woman died in our house," said Kennedy, with a sort of shudder, "and left the little thing."

"Well, it was very good of your wife to bring the child up."

"Humph!" he muttered.

"Well, Kennedy," continued Mrs. Saunders, "you had better announce yourself that you are a Protestant, and that you wish the children to go to church. I shall speak to Grace myself, and will send her down to-morrow morning, to take them to school." And Mrs. Saunders thought within herself—"Thank God, she is not the child of that woman. An orphan. And this man told of his own wife's crime—the mother of his children—to save the strange girl from disgrace. 'Tis very odd." And the good lady buried these things in her heart, and her interest in the protégé increased.

It was early in March, and the hedges and little trees were beginning to tell that spring was come; and the birds sang joyfully in the morning, and there was a smile all round on the face of nature, and Grace and her little brother and sister went regularly to school. Mick had gone off somewhere with his bag, since his mother went to gaol. Grace was such a good girl—she would win her way back into all their hearts. She had done so, dear child—even Mr. Saunders himself began to notice her, and like her. She was nominally living at Fairport, but was constantly down at her father's. And Mrs. Saunders never missed a pin'sworth from the house by Grace, which she had not given her.

When Mrs. Saunders had spoken to her about going to Church, she clapped her hands, and said how glad she was, that she was often going to ask Miss Jane to let her go. She could not understand what they said in the chapel. And on Sundays they locked up the house, and Grace and her father, and brother and sister went to church. Grace used to talk to Miss Jane of all the nice stories of Jesus Christ she heard there.

One morning Mr. Saunders, as he was reading a letter

that the post-boy had just brought, exclaimed, "My goodness! so sudden."

"What is the matter, love?" said his wife, alarmed.

"Poor Mrs. Fortescue is no more," he answered, solemnly.

"You don't say so?" said the lady, her eyes filling with tears. "Why, by the last account she was better."

"Here's the letter from her poor husband:"—

"Florence, February, 18—

"It's all over, Saunders. The temporary flush of health on my darling's cheek was delusive and vain; the last bright glimmer of the lamp ere it went out for ever. Fanny is gone. She expired two days ago, without a struggle, on the sofa in the drawing-room, the last beams of an Italian sun gilding her dying bed. God's will be done. My poor girls now have no mother. Their grief is heartrending. I have nothing to keep me here. Will you, my dear fellow, have everything got ready at the Abbey. I may be home in a week after you receive this—and kind Mrs. Saunders will provide anything wanting in the domestic way.

"Your distressed

"HENRY FORTESCUE.

"J. Saunders, Esq."

Mrs. Saunders was sobbing violently as her husband concluded. She left the room to cry in peace.



CHAPTER VIII.

THE widower came home, but the young bride of his youthful choice slept in a foreign land; and his two little motherless daughters, Mary and Lizzie, returned to the home of their infancy; and they ran about from place to place, and visited again each well-remembered spot—the old tree, round which they played with their nurse—and under which their dear mamma used to tell them little stories: they wept to think she was no longer with them; and the aviary in the garden—the birds all gone, and the wires out of their place and broken; and the little summer-house in the corner, at the end of the old walk, with its pretty painted glass windows, but now locked up—the mistress of it had gone to rest.

"How glad I am that the little Fortescues are come," said Jane to her mother one day.

"It is not likely, my dear, that you will see so much of them as you used to do," answered her mother; "they have their governess now—and their aunt, whom I do not know as well as their poor mother."

The truth was, that Mrs. Saunders saw at a glance that she would not get on well with Miss Fortescue—who joined her brother in England, and partly volunteered and

partly was asked, to look after his little girls. Aunt Biddy—for such was the name she rejoiced in, Bridget being a family name of the Fortescues, and elegantly contracted into Biddy—Aunt Biddy was much older than her brother, and had always been accustomed to advise and dictate to him; and in this case the reins of government were given up without a struggle—and poor Mrs. Saunders, after all her trouble, had nothing right at the Abbey. This would not do—and that was dirty—and this room was badly settled—and those chairs were covered—and this sofa ought to be uncovered—and these curtains must be taken down—and that ottoman placed in the corner; so Mrs. Saunders retreated as soon as possible. She had been caught by the family, on their arrival, actually in the house settling it for them—and Miss Fortescue found fault before her, as if she had been a paid housekeeper.

"I am only the agent's wife," said Mrs. Saunders to herself, and took her leave as soon as she could, determined only to pay the usual visit of ceremony, and leave Miss Fortescue where she was.

But the children, Mary and Lizzie, they were glad to see her, and kissed her and hung on her, and asked when she would come again, and how were Jane, and Charles, and Robert, who was at school in England.

"Come here, my dears," said Miss Fortescue, in a stately way; "do not annoy Mrs. Saunders."

"You are not going?" said Mr. Fortescue, rousing from a sort of lethargy, as she wished him good-bye. "How's Saunders? Come over and dine with us some day—poor Fanny's gone though," and the husband wept for his departed wife.

And he got up early in the morning—there was no danger now of disturbing her as he left her side—and

roamed over the place—her own place ; and the little birds sang, happy, around him, and seemed to mock his grief with their joy ; there was the shady walk, hung over with old trees, where they used to wander up and down ; there the rustic seat where they had sat together ; when the silent language of the eyes at last came into being in sweet words ; and the long-cherished thoughts came forth—his youthful dream of hope became a blessed reality—and he told there his love ; and then she, blushing, consented to be his—he was alone now, and sat there to pour out his sorrow.

Fanny Barton had been the belle of that county, and Henry Fortescue was a dashing light infantry officer, quartered in M——, ten years before, with a couple of hundred a year besides his pay. He met Miss Barton—danced, rode with her—loved her with all the wild enthusiasm of love at twenty-five, and proposed. Mr. Barton objected—Fanny had five thousand pounds ; but an old uncle of Fortescue's made a settlement on him, and the match went on ; after they had been a couple of years married, Mr. Barton's only son got sick, went abroad and died at Madeira of consumption. So Fanny became the heiress now, for her youngest brother, her own favourite, had been lost at sea about two years before her marriage. The property, failing male issue, went in the female line ; and old Barton did not long survive the loss of his eldest son, and by his death four thousand a-year was added to Mr. Fortescue's income ; and his uncle dying soon after, left him fifteen hundred a-year more ; so he had riches—but his treasure, his heart's darling, was gone—what was it all to him ?

CHAPTER IX.

THE news came on; and Grace learned that she should give evidence against her mother, and the thought afflained her very much. To have her punished—may be hung—horrible—she was not fit to die; and Grace made known all her fears to her young mistress, Jane.

"But she will not be put to death," said Jane; "I don't know what the punishment will be, but I am sure she will not be hung."

This was some comfort to Grace—but still she would have to tell; and she talked still to Jane, and the latter at last consented to ask her papa to forgive Mrs. Kennedy.

"No, my love; I am sorry I cannot oblige you; there are some peculiar circumstances about the robbery which would prevent me if I were otherwise inclined;" for Mrs. Saunders had told her husband of Grace being a foundling orphan left in Mrs. Kennedy's charge—what true wife keeps a secret from her husband, or he from her? and yet still it was a secret—the minds, the ideas being one and the same. "Jane," continued her father, "how severely ought that mother to be punished who instead of teaching the child God gives her to live honestly, encourages it in vice; but in this case the mother sought to criminate and blast the character of the child actually

inclined to virtue. Oh, no, Jane, the trial must go on ; I certainly will prosecute."

"Poor Grace will be so sorry."

"Was it Grace asked you to intercede with me ?"

"Yes, papa."

"Grace is a good-hearted girl—but it cannot be done."

* * * * *

The down-coach stops in M—— to change horses—the guard opens the door, and a traveller gets out.

"The attorneys all here, sir," said the waiter, peering into his face.

The stranger did not answer. "A bag and hat-box," he said to the guard.

"Yes, sir; all right, sir; porter has 'em." And the stranger fee'd the coachman and guard.

"That didn't look like an attorney," thought the waiter. "Counsellors, sir, all at the other hotel."

"Indeed ! Can I have a bed here to-night ?"

"Certainly, sir, certainly. Walk in, sir; I'll ax the master."

"Is this the coffee-room ?" inquired the stranger, putting his hand on the lock of a door.

"Stop, sir, stop ! the attorneys is in there."

"Up stairs, I suppose ?"

"There's two of the grand jury in the room up stairs—but here's the master, sir."

"Can I have a bed here to-night, my friend."

"Why, sir, I'm really very sorry, but we're as full as we can hold—an' all the lodgings full too ; I don't know of a bed anywhere."

"Porter, carry those things to the other hotel.

"I'll show you the way, sir," said the landlord.

"Thank you, I know it. Thomas O'Hara's ?"

"Yes, sir."

"Who is he, Pat?" asked the landlord, as the stranger turned off. "I don't know his face comin' here to the assizes."

"Nor I naythur," said the waiter.

"He knows the town well, at all events," replied his master.

Mrs. O'Hara's was full too, more so than the other.

"I am sorry, sir," said her daughter who came to speak to the stranger, "that we cannot accommodate you; but if you will step this way for a moment, I shall send out to inquire if we can get a bed in the town for you."

"Thank you," answered the stranger, "that will do very well;" and he followed her into a little room off the kitchen, where her mother was sitting at tea, and he stepped in as if he knew the place quite well. Mrs. O'Hara rose as he entered. "Sit down, sir, won't you. You must be cold off the coach," at the same time placing a chair for him.

"I did not find it very cold; I was inside," and he took off his hat and sat down.

"Perhaps you will take a cup of tea, sir, while you are waiting."

"Why, I will order tea, if you will allow me, Mrs. O'Hara, provided you stay here and make it for me, for I'll not have you turned out of your room. I may live here, I suppose," he continued, smiling, "even though I sleep out."

"Oh, certainly, sir, I am much obliged to you;" and Mrs. O'Hara looked over at the stranger as he smiled. "Kate, order fresh tea."

"And in a hurry, Kate, do you hear; I only took a snack in Dublin, and am hungry enough."

And Mrs. O'Hara stared again. He called her daughter "Kate," and not in an impudent way at all, but just

nice and friendly, as if he knew her all his life. Who is he at all?

And the stranger took off his outside coat, and drew his chair close to the fire, and leaned back, and looked round the room, as if he and it were old friends. He was a tall, military-looking man, about two-and-thirty, with brown hair, just turning to grey; and a fine handsome forehead, large nose, and clear blue eyes, which lighted up with a sweet expression when he parted his lips to smile; and he put his feet on the fender, and made himself quite at home. So the tea things came in, and as the stranger's eye turned on Mrs. O'Hara, he caught her staring at him intently.

He poured out his tea, and Kate said that they had found a bed for the gentleman in a very small room down the street, if he did not mind that.

"Oh, no," said the stranger, "six feet square will do me." And Kate went about her household occupations.

"Well, Mrs. O'Hara, how is the world using you?" asked the stranger, helping himself to bread and butter.

"Why, then, tolerably well, sir, considering—these assizes twice a-year help us."

"Is there a heavy calendar this time?"

"I really don't know, sir; I don't trouble my head much about these things."

"Is there any news in the neighbourhood?"

"Why, nothing particular, sir; I don't take the paper since my husband died; and I don't hear much. You know this part of the country, sir?" she asked.

"A little; I was here when a boy."

"You're coming to the assizes, sir?" she again asked.

"Yes, coming to the assizes," and he smiled again.

"Well, barristers make a great deal of money at the law."

"They do," he observed, apparently amused.

"And the attorneys, sir; they're a money-making set. But, my goodness, sir, she hasn't left you a sugar tongs," and the old woman stood up to get him one.

"Don't stir—don't stir, Mrs. O'Hara; stay, here's one," and he turned round and opened a little cupboard in the wall behind him, and found a pair.

Mrs. O'Hara looked at him. "You know the place well, sir," she observed at length; "who are ye at all?"

"Sit down—sit down, Mrs. O'Hara," and he smiled at her again. "Come, tell me does Mr. Denham live in this neighbourhood?"

"His son does, but his daughters are all married."

"And the Roystons—what has become of them?"

"All here still, sir; the three young gentlemen married, and one of the daughters. The other poor thing is single still; she was going to be married, I believe, but the poor young gentleman was shot."

"Poor Livy—poor Henderson," sighed the stranger; I thought it would be so."

"You knew Mr. Henderson?" said the old woman; "many's the time he was in this room with my poor husband."

"Indeed I did, poor fellow—I saw him shot."

"Who on earth are you, sir?" And the stranger smiled a melancholy smile at her again.

"And the Hamiltons and Dillons?" he questioned on.

"Mr. Hamilton's there still; but Mr. Dillon gave up his place, and sold off everything; some said he was broke. And Mr. Saunders, Mr. Fortescue's agent, lives there now."

"And who is Mr. Fortescue?"

"Oh, sir, he married Mr. Barton's daughter, and then he got the property at the old man's death."

"Sure there was another son," said the stranger, quickly.

"There was, sir—Master Henry. But the poor young man got decline, and went to the Continent, and died; and the old gentleman didn't live long after him."

"Poor Henry," sighed the stranger to himself.

"Did you know him, too, sir?"

After a pause the stranger asked—"And Mr. Fortescue, is he at home now?"

"Yes, sir, he is; but the poor man is in great grief; he lost his wife—she died last month, in Italy, of decline, too."

"His wife," cried the stranger—she dead—all—all gone"—and the tears filled the blue eyes and trickled down his cheek.

"I know you now," screamed his companion, starting up; "I know you now. You're Charles Barton, if he's in the world;" and the tall man stood up and clasped her in his arms, and kissed her, and cried on in silence; and she hugged him, and said, "I know you now!"

Kate looked into the room, and the tall stranger was still kissing her mother; but they did not mind her—she wisely left them there.

"Why didn't ye tell me?" said Mrs. O'Hara, as they resumed their seats.

"I wanted to find out all about the family first."

"And sure they all thought you were drowned."

"Oh, that's a long story, which I'll tell you some time or other—you see I'm not."

"You are come down here to the assizes then to look for the property?"

"Oh! no! no! I had no idea my brother was dead. I have earned my own fortune—I came after a long absence to find a loved, darling sister and brother—and pass the rest of my days with them—and they are both

dead—and I am alone in the world”—and his tears flowed afresh.

At length he said, “Your intelligence has quite overcome me. Dear Mrs. O’Hara will you send some one to show me my lodgings, and to-morrow I will speak with you again;” and he went away.

He was up again early in the morning; indeed he scarcely slept. He took a stick, and went along the well-known road towards home. It was very early; the birds had hardly commenced their morning song; no one was stirring—on he went—each turn in the road so familiar—each tree so well remembered—the very ditches, as he walked, seemed friends to him—each little object was recognized, and were pleasant companions to his thoughts along the old road.

There is the little village now, near his former home, and the old church, with its well-known spire, like an index fore-finger, pointing up to warn and check evil doers. That church where he so often prayed with the dear ones gone—that church in which he had so often been, a thoughtless lad, with other thoughts than prayer. And the good clergyman, too, Mr. Head, was he there still?—who used so remind the young people that it was God’s house in which they were, and would they not respect Him. Had God forgiven him all the sins of negligence and wilful ignorance, and headlong crime that he had indulged in when there before? and the tears trickled down the troubled sinner’s cheek. The Christian felt that God was merciful, and had forgiven; but was he not tried sorely now?

He came to the old gate and the hedge inside, and the avenue disappearing through the trees. The gate people were not up, he thought; at all events, he would not trust himself that way. Old Peggy Crawford, if she was there, would be sure to know him.

And he went on under the high park-wall, and came to the stile so often passed before, and climbed over. Once again in the dear old place! And his heart was full—up in his mouth. He hurried on through the wood, and the old trees looked down and smiled on him, looking young again with the coming spring; and he looked up at the old friends to welcome the stranger home—old friends that changed not, though all else changed—old friends, old trees, the dear ones that played with him amongst them were gone—the sunny faces had ceased to smile—but the old trees, the warrior nurses, the grim playmates of childhood's happy hour, they were there, still there—they only to welcome the stranger home. He reached the end of the wood. There was the large lawn before him, and the clumps of trees, and the house, the dear house, in the distance—and he folded his arms and looked at the view before him. Still he looked—

“And as he gazed on each loved scene,
He felt, he felt he was a boy again.”

He stood there lost in thought, and the tears rolled fast from his eyes. His whole past life came up as one view before him. His childhood's happy days, when his angel mother kissed and petted her golden-haired darling youngest son—the spoiled pet—and taught him to lisp at her knee his infant prayers. And she went first. Then his boyhood, like a dark cloud after a bright hour of sunshine; his stern father, and the hasty blow—his boiling blood, and the bitter secret tears of early manhood's shame at being beaten like a dog—and then the reckless daring, and headlong rush to sin. Then, farther on, a lad—still worse, more steeped in vice; and then a vein of gold in the dark mass of dross—dear Mary, that loved him so well, his first love, his last, his darling wife who died so

soon—and a passionate burst of grief checked the thought. He skirted along the wood. Should he approach the house? There was no one up yet; it was still very early. He would just visit the shrubbery at the end, and then go. And he entered 'mid the trees again, and reached the shrubbery, and the old walk, the dear old walk; here the arbour that he and Henry helped old John, the gardener, to make. The old trees, too, like dear relations, the others only friends; and he sauntered on slowly, to take in all. Of the smallest shrub he would not miss the sight—the very weeds had pleasure for him. The seat there still round old Jack's tree—"Fanny's seat," that he and Jack had made—he threw himself on it, covered his face, and wept on—it did him good. He was at home at last.

A step was on the gravel-walk behind him. Mr. Fortescue was up early too; he had grief in his heart and could not sleep long, and came to the old walk before breakfast, where no one could see him or his sorrow. Who can that be on the seat? The stranger stood up, and bowed. He raised his hat with such a true air of breeding, that Mr. Fortescue involuntarily did the same. The two perfect gentlemen recognised each other in that simple action.

"You will pardon my intrusion, sir," said Barton, "when you learn I am a friend of the family who lived here formerly; and I came thus early in the morning to visit the old place, thinking that no one would be up. As it is, I fear I have ventured too near the house."

"Any friend of Mr. Barton's is always most welcome to the Abbey," replied Mr. Fortescue, with a slight tremor in his voice. He perceived the tears still in Barton's eyes. "I dare say I have seen you here before."

"I hardly think so; Mr. Fortescue, I presume"—that

gentleman bowed. "I have not been here for nearly twelve years. My name is Clayton—Captain Clayton."

"Of the army?" asked Mr. Fortescue, with interest.

"The East India Company's service. I have been abroad for a long time, and just passing through this neighbourhood, came to visit a spot where I have passed many happy days."

"I hope you will allow me to ask you to stay and breakfast here; and, in the meantime, we will take a turn up and down this old walk we both know so well." The stranger acquiesced, and the two men walked on together.

And they talked of old times—of his father and sister; and Barton felt his heart warming to that sister's sorrowing husband; but not by a word did he betray who he was.

"You knew Henry Barton?" asked Mr. Fortescue, as they approached the house.

"Very well, indeed. He was a fine fellow, generous to a fault—always of a quiet, retiring disposition. He was his father's favourite."

"The old man did not long survive him," rejoined Mr. Fortescue. The loss of his heir broke his heart."

And they entered the hall—the old hall, with its pictures round the walls—all there still. Once again there; not now to be insulted and beaten, and turned out to beg—a wanderer on the face of the earth—by that parent who ought to have won the wayward, high-spirited boy by the hand of love, rather than have sought to crush the proud soul with the rod of iron. Now he was the owner there—the rightful possessor; and his eye kindled as he looked round him with pride. He followed his host into the breakfast-room.

The family had not yet come down stairs.

There was a picture covered with crape over the chim-

ney-piece—Mr. Fortescue went over to it and pulled aside the black curtain. “Do you know that face?” he asked mournfully.

His poor sister; there as large as life; the dear eyes again smiling down upon him, and the lips parted, just as if she was going to speak; the same happy, joyous look; the same sweet smile, as she had so many years ago, when she used in that same parlour greet him with a loving sister’s kiss in the morning, and preside at the happy breakfast-table; the bright sun of the sister, on one side, more than counteracting the dark cloud of the father, on the other; and the brother—now the only one left—the outcast, yet the pet of the brother and sister gone.

He went closer and closer to the almost speaking portrait—“Fanny,” he murmured, and leaning his head on the chimney-piece, sobbed aloud.

The husband looked on. “An old lover,” he thought to himself; and he gently came behind him, and drew again the dark crape.

The children, Mary and Lizzie, came in, and their governess and Miss Fortescue—and the stranger recovered himself, and was introduced.

“Captain Clayton, Miss Fortescue; Miss Manners; an old friend of poor Fanny’s,” he continued, and the children came to kiss their father.

“Your little ones?” Barton asked; and he shook hands with them; and they became great friends, and got on his knee, and amused him with their childish prattle; and little Lizzie, so like her mother. “Who was she called ‘Lizzie’ after? she ought to have been called ‘Fanny.’” And they sat at breakfast; reserve wore off by degrees; and the children laughed, and made their little funny remarks and asked those curious questions. The stranger

sat between them—and the seniors laughed too, as they chatted more freely; and all felt happy—Barton talked so well of all he had seen—

“The battles, sieges, fortunes he had past;”

and the rest listened with interest.

“I wish you would come and spend a few days with us,” asked Mr. Fortescue. “You are in M—— now, I suppose?”

“Yes; I walked from that this morning.”

“Do come,” said Lizzie; “I want to show you my garden.”

“And the rabbits,” said Mary.

“And the pigeons.”

“And the Cave.”

“Do promise,” said they both.

He looked down at the little darlings.

“I am much obliged,” he said. “I will avail myself of your kind invitation. I must go back, however, to M—— to-day.”

“Oh, we are all going in after breakfast. There is some trial going on there, and the children were anxious to hear it; so we are all going to the court-house, and we can give you a seat in, and bring you out.”

Thus it was arranged.

The ladies went up stairs to dress for the drive; and Barton strolled into the garden by himself.

“Shall I deprive those angels of this place?” he said aloud; “I, who have no tie to bind me to the world but them. However, they must know me and love me as their uncle. Yes. I'll tell this evening.”

And the carriage came to the door, and they all drove into M——.

CHAPTER X.

CONCLUSION.

THE first day of the assizes, and the court quite full; the groups of barristers talking in the lobby—the briefless ones endeavouring to look as if they were fagged to death with all they had to do; a pale look some of them had certainly—but caused more by the last night's carouse than by hard study. And the clients and witnesses waiting round the door and in the street, till their several causes came on.

Grace and her father were in early; and they waited in the square, in front of the court-house. There were the police going up to the gaol for the prisoners; back they came, and the curious crowd after them; and Grace and her father stopped to see them pass—"Just to see mother," she said.

There she was, walking boldly on—the other females covered their heads in their cloaks, or looked down, avoiding the busy gaze of the idle; but Mrs. Kennedy glared round her with an air of defiance; and her gaze lit on her husband and Grace: "There ye are—are ye?" she shouted. "Bad luck to yez both;" and the police hurried her on. Two-and-two the prisoners passed.

"Look, look! father dear," and Grace pointed to them.

There was Mick, his eldest son, amongst the last, with downcast look, handcuffed to another lad, like himself. And they were all thrust into the cell under the court-house.

The judges came down—and the trumpet played—and they went into court.

Mrs. Saunders was there—in the grand jury box, with Jane and Charles ; and the Fortescue party arrived soon after. The little girls prayed their papa to let them go and sit beside Jane, who was in front; and he did, although his sister frowned. The children brought their new friend with them.

“He’s such a nice little man,” whispered Lizzie to Jane.

“Little” was a term of affection they had—and Jane looked with astonishment as she saw the tall soldier, and heard him called “little.” There they all sat; and the “little” man was so nice, and talked with the children; and so funny, and made them laugh so much.

But the Crier ordered “Silence,” and a case came on. The Kennedys were not the first on the list. So the party waited.

At last Catherine Kennedy’s name was called, and she was placed at the bar, and Mr. Saunders, as prosecutor, got on the table and was sworn.

He deposed to the money being in the work-box—that it was missed, and part of it found on the prisoner’s person ; and detailed the facts with which the reader is acquainted.

“I think,” said the counsel for the prosecution, “we must have your daughter on the table, sir, if you please.”

“She is very young, but if required will take an oath.”

And Jane was sent for, and though a little timid at first, yet very nicely proved her leaving the money in her work-box, and missing it on her return from driving ; also that she recognised the silver found on the prisoner.

And now "Grace Kennedy" was called ; and at length, after her name had been repeated a second time, she was helped into the witness-box by her father. She had been crying, and looked very melancholy.

"Do you know the prisoner at the bar?" asked the Crown counsel.

"Yes, sir," said Grace, in a voice scarcely audible.

"You must speak a little louder, my girl. Do you know the prisoner at the bar?"

"Yes, sir."

"Do you recollect the 17th of March last?"

Grace paused—"Not the day of the month, sir."

"Do you recollect money being taken out of Miss Jane Saunders' work-box?"

"Yes, sir."

"Were you in the room that day?"

"I was, sir."

"Will you relate to the gentlemen of the jury what took place in the room while you were there?"

And Grace commenced in a faltering voice to tell her story. Her bonnet was off, and her beautiful hair and face were seen to great advantage. She spoke very low, but every word was distinctly heard. All listened with breathless attention to the lovely child—an evidence to prove a bad mother's guilt.

And the little party up stairs—how absorbed they were, and held their breath lest they should lose a word. And Charles Barton, how he does listen—how he stares at the prisoner, and then at the little witness, his eyes starting from his head, his interest in the proceedings was so intense.

Grace went on, and told her own little temptation, and told of her having the money in her hand"—and stopped.

"Well, go on, my girl," said the Judge.

"Come, my good girl, proceed with your story," said the counsel.

Grace paused still—her little bosom heaved.

"Well, the Court is waiting for you."

"Oh, sir, for God's sake, don't ask me to tell any more."

"Oh, sir," she continued, addressing the Judge, "don't ask me"—and the long pent-up tears that had striven with her, burst out.

The good old Judge looked down at his notes to get his voice steady.

The Crown counsel said quietly, "You must go on, my girl. You had the money in your hand. Did you put it back in the purse?"

"No, sir," she sobbed.

"Was the prisoner at the bar in the room while you had the money in your hand? Come now, tell me."

"I can't—I can't, indeed, sir," screamed Grace, a fresh torrent breaking forth.

The Judge blew his nose. "My good girl," he said, "you are old enough to know what an oath is. You have sworn to tell the truth, and the whole truth. Go on, and tell this gentleman what happened after you had the money in your hand."

"I can't, indeed—I can't, indeed," said Grace.

A stifled sob was heard from the gallery. The tears rolled down all the little girls' cheeks.

"She gave it to me—she gave it to me, my lord," shouted the prisoner.

It was a sudden re-action; all looked at the speaker. Could it be possible?

The woman perceived the effect her exclamation produced, and repeated, "She gave it to me not to tell that I seen her take it out of the box."

"Oh ! mother, mother," said Grace, looking round, "you know I didn't."

"Don't call me mother, ye lyin' devil. You're no child cf mine. Ye gev me the money as sure as I'm standin' here. Was it for this I took ye from the stranger that wouldn't keep ye? Was it for this I nursed ye up decent, ye good-for-nothin' beggar's brat?"

"You're a liar," shouted a stentorian voice from the gallery ; "you're a liar," it repeated, louder again. "She is no beggar's brat, but as honestly born as any in this court. And this is the way," he shouted on, "that you have kept your word and fulfilled your trust."

All looked up at this extraordinary proceeding ; and there was Charles Barton leaning over the gallery, with flashing eye and dilated nostril, shaking his clenched hand at the prisoner. She looked at him, screamed, fell back fainting, and was removed ; and Grace looked up, and the eyes of both met ; the instinct of nature spoke, and Grace, scarce knowing what she did, stretched out her arms towards him, and he, holding out his hands to her, cried, "My child, my child, my child," and fell back himself insensible.

A little longer, kind reader.

He was helped into the outer room, and all crowded round him—the Roystons and Hamiltons, and all his early friends ; and "Who is he?" was whispered from mouth to mouth. A young lady came forward and touched one of the Mr. Royston's arms ; "let me see him again, George," she asked ; and she looked at him through the crowd, intently, for a moment—"It's Charles Barton," she said, sobbing, "poor Tom Henderson's old friend."

And "Charles Barton" was quickly buzzed about ; and Mr. Fortescue heard it again and again repeated. He

walked up to Barton—by this time recovered—“Do I hear rightly,” he asked, “that you are Charles Barton, my wife’s brother?”

“ You do indeed,” said Barton, standing up, and grasping his hand; “ forgive me not telling you this morning, but I waited to know you better.”

“ You came to take possession of the property, I presume, and visited it this morning to see how it looked. I hope you found everything to your satisfaction,” said Mr. Fortescue, coldly, withdrawing his hand.

“ No, no, Fortescue; indeed, indeed, you wrong me. I only arrived here last night, after many years of toil in a distant land, believing that my brother Henry lived, and came to spend the rest of my life with him and my darling sister—amongst early friends, in the scenes of my boyhood. I had searched in vain for the woman to whom I entrusted my child, and came here for comfort—brother and sister are gone, but the child is found. Ah! Fortescue, you wrong me—indeed you do.” The tears coursed each other down his rough cheek.

“ I believe you, I believe you,” said the other, now giving his hand in turn: and Peter was sent for, and Grace—and the father clasped his dear long-lost, long-left child: and Kennedy assured him that she was indeed his, and described the ring he had given to his wife—pledged years ago.

And they all went home to the Abbey—Mr. and Mrs. Saunders, and Jane, and Charles, and Peter; but the news had gone home before them. There was a crowd of tenantry at the gate; and Peggy Crawford ran over to the carriage as it stopped, peered into Barton’s face, and cried, tossing up her hands—“ It’s him, boys—it’s him, sure enough—the ould man’s son—Master Charley himself!”

There was a shout—and another—oh! a real hearty cheer. The long-lost, but not forgotten, favourite, come back.

They removed the horses, and dragged the carriage up to the house; and he stood up, and took off his hat, and thanked them, and stretched down his hand to shake hands with the old men as they walked by the side. Cheer on—cheer on. They would not be controlled—another cheer. He steps into the house—his old home—his own indeed now.

After dinner Peter was called for—thanked again by Captain Barton, got a glass of wine to drink his and Grace's health; and was made to sit down to hear the Captain's story.

"I never lived on good terms with my father," he began; "we always were quarrelling; he was too harsh—and I too hasty: and one day at last, when I was about twenty, he struck me for some slight offence. I told him angrily to desist—and he repeated the blow: my blood was up. I reproached him bitterly; used language that I now deeply regret; and, with threats and imprecations, was ordered by him to quit the house.

"I never saw him after.

"I rushed into the room where my sister and her governess were sitting, and kissing them both, bade them farewell. That governess—my darling Mary—was the mother of Grace. We had become attached to each other, and rash, impatient boy that I was, I had persuaded her to unite her fate with mine some two months before. Long she opposed my wishes—often she pleaded the sin of a clandestine marriage, so treacherous as it would be in her case: my energy prevailed. She at last yielded to my solicitations; and, during a short absence of my father from home, we were married in a neighbouring parish.

Poor Fanny was spending the day with some friends, and Henry was out shooting. And I quarrelled then, hastily, and, with like boyish rashness, left my young wife.

"I arrived in Dublin to look for a situation, but failed from want of interest; and again, in a fit of folly and desperation, enlisted in the 2nd Foot.

"I wrote to Mary, begging of her to be comforted; and pictured happy visions of future eminence and glory.

"The dépôt was at Chatham, whither I was sent.

"After a few months I got a sweet, tender letter from my darling wife, telling me that she was likely to become a mother; and soon after, while I was still in doubt what step to take, the agonizing intelligence also arrived, in another hurried note from her, that her situation had been discovered, and that my father had instantly expelled her from the house; but, by the connivance of my sister, she had been admitted to the gate-lodge, and was concealed there when she wrote.

"I went to the major commanding, and asked for furlough for a week. He would not consent. I begged—entreated—even knelt to him; he was inexorable. I wrote to the Horse Guards to an officer whom I had often met at my father's; I told him the whole case, and my real name—for I had assumed one on enlisting. I appealed to his feelings as a father and a husband to get me leave; it came down by return of post for a fortnight. How angry the major was! Well, I borrowed £2 from my sergeant—pawned my watch,—started for Ireland—and hurried home. There was my poor darling wife lying on the bed in Peggy Crawford's. She had an old aunt living at P—, about twenty miles off, and we considered it best, under the circumstances, to go there. I did not even wait to see my sister, but got a common country car, which

was the only sort of conveyance my finances would allow, and set off. On the road she became very weak, and we had to stop at a decent-looking cottage by the wayside, where this man, Peter, lived then, and during the night my loved wife was taken in premature labour, and dear Grace was born. But it was too much for the poor mother —she breathed her last in a few hours after. Oh! the agony of that night—the little naked infant and dead mother!

“I waited but to consign the loved body to the tomb, and then prepared to rejoin my regiment. The woman of the house swore that she would take care of the child as her own if I would only leave it with her. I hardly cared for it, now that the mother was gone. I gave her a ring, and all the money I had, and begged my way by degrees to Chatham. A detachment of ours was ordered out to India. There I saved, accidentally, the life of our colonel’s only son; he bought me out, and persuaded me to tell him my history and name—that assumed was Clayton;—he, too, had known the Bartons, and was an Irishman.

“I became a volunteer in the Company’s service, and, by his interest, and some bravery on my own part, obtained a cadetship, soon rose to my present rank, and worked my way to wealth and honour. I was wounded in battle, and the doctors recommended my native air to recruit me: but first I searched for the child, but could learn no tidings of Kennedy or his wife.”

“No, sir,” said Kennedy, interrupting. “She ruined me by dhrink, an’ I had to give up the place. I then went to E——, and you know all the rest.”

And he clasped his little daughter, who had now on a nice white frock of Jane’s, and a blue sash, and looked so pretty.

"I have two fathers now," she said, "but no mother." She looked at Mrs. Saunders, and ran to her. "May I come?—will you be?" and the lady took her in her arms and kissed her. The poor little child that she had rescued from ignorance, vice, and poverty, and in their stead had planted education, virtue, and religion, now stood there a great and rich heiress, to thank and bless her for those blessings which the wealth of nations cannot buy.

The jury found Katty Kennedy guilty, and she was transported for seven years; and Mick, convicted also of theft from the Worrells, was sentenced to one year's imprisonment.

Mr. Fortescue would not hear of any division, as Captain Barton proposed. "No," said he, "I have nearly £2000 a-year without this property; but as you wish to do something, I will not, my dear fellow, cast away your kindness. Forgive me the back rents, and I am content."

Peter Kennedy got a nice house, and little Katty and Peter were taken up to the Abbey. And Grace went to call at Fairport, in her own carriage—the poor little girl off the bog. And William blubbered out when he saw her; but she put her arms round his neck and kissed him, and ran down to see Margaret and Catherine.

"I always said so," sobbed the cook, as she hugged her. I knew she couldn't take it."

Poor Mary and Lizzie! were they to leave the dear home where they had been born, and the rabbits and pigeons and little gardens? Grace saw them sorrowful, and found out the cause. "No," she said, "you shall stay and live here—I'll not take anything of yours; and then you'll teach me my lessons instead of Jane." And the papas consented, and the two families lived on together, and Miss Fortescue said "Good-bye," and somebody—supposed to be Peggy Crawford—said, "Joy be with her, she's no great loss."

And the three cousins grew up together, all like sisters—three sweet Graces instead of one ; and Mary and Lizzie learned that the true way of being loved was first to love, and were taught by Grace, thinking of her early days in misery, to do unto others even as they would wish others to do to them ; and the story, commenced in the cold, dreary bog, continued at happy Fairport, is finished at the Abbey.



THE FOUNDLING.

CHAPTER I.

IT was a bleak cold night: the wind blew keenly; a nasty drizzling rain was falling. The road was dirty and wet leading from the town of M—— towards Ronbullogue. It was between eight and nine o'clock; the petty huxters were beginning to close their shops; a public-house at the corner was still open. A female, wrapped in a cloak, without a bonnet, turns the corner, peers into the public-house, then looks down the road. She hurries along it; she is carrying a bundle under her cloak. On she goes; every now and then cautiously looking about her. She still speeds on. She leaves the town behind—on into the dark country. There is a narrow bridge before her, over the canal. She hangs over the parapet; she hugs the bundle she carries closer to her breast. Hush! there is a step; a man passed by. "Good-night," he says, in a loud, honest voice. She muttered something in reply; he has gone. She looks again into the dark water, silent and still beneath her. She leaves the bridge and

stands beside it. There it is, the cold wet tomb; the moving, quivering, shaking grave; to cover all, hide all; not tell, not boast, not deceive; once there, 'tis over; no heart-burnings, no poverty, no taunts, no shame and disgrace—so she thinks within herself. One look to heaven.

“O God! pity and forgive for Christ's sake!”

Splash—and the dark waters swallow up and gurgle over their prey.

What a knocking at the lock-keeper's door!

“Peter Connor, Peter Connor; up, man, up! here's work for you! up, up, I say!” and hand and foot thundered against the door.

Peter had just gone to bed; but he hastily arose and went to the door. A man stood there, who cried when he saw him—“Your boat-hook, quick! give it to me, for God's sake! there's a woman in the canal. Give me the hook, and get a rope and lantern, and follow me yourself; quick! quick!”

The hook was quickly brought, and the stranger took it. Peter Connor soon followed with the other things and a servant-boy; the whole family turned out also.

“Where is she at all?” said Peter, casting the glare of the light across the water.

“Stop, stop!” said the stranger; “there she is, in the centre; but I can't reach her with this pole; wait though,” and he tied the end of the rope round him. “Now,” he continued, “I'll go in as far as I can, and do you all pull when I shout.”

And he did so. On he went, up to the arm-pits. He tried the pole again; it just reached the object, but his foot slipped, and it was pushed further away. He swam a little, and succeeded in getting the boat-hook attached to the floating object.

"Pull now," he shouted, and he was soon on the shore. On pulling in his boat-hook, also, he found it was nothing but a bundle he had rescued. He took it up, and held the light.

"A baby!" they all cried.

"Here, wife," said the lock-keeper, "take it into the fire, and see if there is any life in it, while we seek for the mother."

But it was in vain. More lanterns were procured. The whole canal was lighted up. Nothing else on the surface. Each little turf floating along was caught, but no body underneath. She had indeed sunk; and the ripple on the water and the spitting rain, with the whistling wind, chanted a dirge for the dead.

They returned to the house.

"It's alive!" were the words that greeted them.

"A fine boy," said Mrs. Connor, standing up; "an' I think he was asleep the whole time, an' not drowned at all."

And his preserver looked at him, and said that he should go and dry himself; but that he would be there again in the morning to drag for the body. "I seen her lookin' over the bridge," he continued, "as I was goin' home; an' she didn't answer me when I spoke; an' something tould me that all wasn't right; so I waited after I passed her, and thin I heard her jumpin' in."

The neighbours went home; and the little visitor, after getting some nourishment from Mrs. Connor, who was herself nursing, fell asleep, and was put to bed with the eldest little girl, Mary Anne, of seven years old, who was very proud indeed of the charge.

They all at last slept. The son, with the life blood thrilling warm through his little veins—the innocent infant spared. The mother also slept, not again to wake,

until the last trump shall sound to call the dead to life and judgment. She sleeps in death ; the body inanimate and cold—the heart-throb hushed and still—the parent taken—the helpless infant left to battle with the world alone.



CHAPTER II.

THE next morning the authorities came to have the canal searched for the body ; and after some hours' exertion it was found. The face was that of a pretty young woman of three or four and twenty years, but bearing marks of poverty and suffering. Her clothes were very scanty and bad ; the cloak, which it was supposed sank her in the water, being the only tolerable article of dress on her. A portion of a letter was found in her pocket, with the words " Dear Thomas " on it, which Mrs. Connor carefully preserved. The coroner was sent for, and an inquest held.

A lodging-house keeper deposed that she had arrived in M—— the evening before her death, very tired and foot-sore. On the day after, towards evening, she told her that she had no money to pay for the lodging or the bit she ate, at which information she, the lodging-house keeper, was very angry, and said a great deal to her ; and after dark, when her back was turned, out in the kitchen, she snatched up her baby and darted off, and she never saw her alive after.

James Roberts, the man who had been so instrumental in saving the child's life, next related what he had witnessed, and after a few questions from some of the jury, a

verdict of "temporary insanity," as the cause of her suicide, was returned.

In the course of the day, Mrs. Connor had a visit from her friend and croney, Mrs. Pender, the gate-woman at the mill.

"It's wonderful entirely," said the latter, on being informed of all the particulars. "An' God's ways are wonderful, glory be to His name. An' what'll you do with the child, Mrs. Connor? God bless him, but he's a fine boy."

"Why thin, Mrs. Pender, I don't know. He's a darling baby sure enough, an' my heart warmed to him since I had him at my breast; he's about the one age with my own; but my husband says that we couldn't afford to keep him unless the parish pays."

"An' ye know nothing at all of the mother?" asked Mrs. Pender.

"No thin, nor no one else; all we got on her was a piece of a letter, torn off just, with 'dear Thomas' on part of it, an' nobody in the town knows more of her."

"Then she hadn't a weddin' ring on?" again questioned Mrs. Pender.

"I believe not," answered Mrs. Connor, a little confused; but if she hadn't, sure it might have slipped off. She was a nice purty creature, an' her hands were white and soft; not much beyond twenty."

"Poor thing!" said her companion; "to think of her goin' before God with all her sins on her head. Such an awful thing—suicide they call it. Sure it's a bad way of avoidin' trouble in this world, to go to it in the next; and the awfulest thing in the world before God is throwin' away the life that He gave. An' what'll you do with it, Mrs. Connor?"

"Why thin," Mrs. Pender, as I've taken a fancy to it,

an' it's a poor lone creature in the world, my husband is goin' to ask the churchwardens to lave it with me. He knows Mr. Dalton well, an' I'm sure they'll do it for him. I wouldn't like, I confess, to part the little darlin' now."

"Well, God will reward you for your kind intentions, anyhow," replied Mrs. Pender, as she took her leave.

So the little orphan was grafted on a new stem, and, unconscious of the change, received sustenance from a stranger's breast. He increased daily, and was in every way a much stronger child than his little foster-brother, Willy Connor. "For fear of accidents," as Mrs. Connor said, she had him christened by Father Dunne, the priest, giving him the name of Thomas. For, as she wisely remarked, thinking of the scrap of paper in her possession, "the chances are that was his father's name;" and as the canal and he were tolerably well acquainted, the surname of Waters was added by one of his sponsors.

The child still grew and waxed strong, and a sort of feeling of envy used sometimes to enter Mrs. Connor's mind as she compared her own child's height and strength with that of the nursling.

Time rolled on, and little Thomas Waters, like most fellows of his years, rolled on through time.

When he and Willy Connor were between five and six years old, they were one day playing along the canal, when Willy cried—

"There's Ned Heffernan's ass. Come an' we'll have a ride."

"No," said Tommy, "I'll stay here."

"Ye won't come, then?"

"No, I won't."

"Well, ye may stay," and away ran Willy to the ass.

Tommy continued his play of throwing stones into the canal, when he heard a loud scream, and looking round,

he saw Willy lying at a distance on some stones. He ran to him.

"What's the matter, Willy, alannah?"

"I'm hurt, I'm hurt," screamed the child. "Oh! my back, my back, my back."

"Get up, Willy, and come to mother—come."

"Let me alone;" I can't walk, I can't walk;" and his wild screams sounded fearfully along the still road.

Tommy began to cry himself, and ran towards home.

"Oh! mother, mother," he said, as he entered, almost breathless—"Come, come, Willy, Willy."

And he ran out again, followed by Mrs. Connor, and they reached the child. His cries redoubled as his mother came. He tried to raise himself, and fell back again. She saw that something dreadful had happened to him; she took him in her arms.

"Alannah machree, my heart's treasure, what is it; tell me. There now, don't cry."

"Oh! you're hurtin' me, you're hurtin' me," screamed the boy.

"There, there, acushla; pulse of my heart, don't cry."

She turned towards the house, casting as she went, a savage look at Tommy.

"You dirty whelp, is this the way you minded him?"

The boy did not understand the words, but the look sank into his mind, and did not need translation; and the stream of pitying sorrow for another became one of anguish in himself; bitter, bitter pain and grief as his only friend, the only mother he had known, looked darkly on him; and poor Tommy, wandering along the canal bank, sat down on a stone and cried till evening, when the sharp pang of hunger within, brought him home.

There were many people in the cottage as he crept in. The women were going backwards and forwards from the

kitchen to the inner room ; and, getting near the door of the latter, he heard Willy moaning inside.

"How is Willy ?" he asked one of the girls passing out.

"Bad enough," was the reply ; "they say his back 's broke."

Tommy, with a bursting heart, stole on into the room, and there was poor Willy on the little bed, where they both used to sleep, pale and moaning. His father sitting on one side, and his mother kneeling on the other, with a cup of water, which she from time to time put to his lips.

A stifled sob from Tommy caused her to turn her head.

"Ye're there, are ye?" she shouted at him. "Have ye the face to come here at all, at all? Look here," she continued, drawing him over to the bed, "there 's yer work for ye, ain't ye proud of it; there's the better child than yourself—that you helped to make a cripple of."

And Tommy's pent-up grief gave way ; and he threw himself on the bed, crying in all the bitterness of his heart.



CHAPTER III.

THE father did not speak, but his wife bitterly lamented.

"My darlin' boy—the pride of my heart—that could keep up the house when I was ould—an' ye're there worse than a cripple. My only son—the only boy I ever had, ye're there, but only a shadow, now. Oh ! may the curses of heaven light on that unfortunate ass that threw him, an' that dirty little blackguard that let him get up."

"Ye may well cry, ye ugly lookin' thief; but that won't make him well. It was an unlucky night that ye was taken out of the canal; an' a misfortune that the first sup ye robbed that boy of didn't choke ye."

"Mother," said Willy, in a low voice, beginning to understand something of what was going on, "sure Tommy didn't do anything. He wouldn't come to the ass, an' I ran off myself; he wasn't near the ass when I fell."

And poor Tommy looked up gratefully, and Willy forgot his pain, and the little eyes looked tenderly into each other, and the hearts of love were joined in that look, and a ray of sunshine gleamed mid clouds and thick darkness.

"Go along down out of this," said Mrs. Connor,

"an' get to yer bed. Ye may sleep with Jack Daly to-night."

So Tommy hurried away; and Mary Anne got him his supper, and put him to sleep in her own bed, instead of on the loft with the servant-boy.

The morning came, but no better account. The doctor again saw Willy, and said that he had been severely injured in the spine; that he could not hold out any hopes of his recovery; and he much doubted if his life would be spared.

Oh! the lamentations of the mother on this being told to her; outrageous and violent—bemoaning at one time her hard fate in having her only son a cripple; at another, abusing and cursing Tommy, whom she considered the cause of the misfortune.

Poor Tommy! The first frown of life came on him—it had smiled up to this.

Mrs. Connor on every occasion treated him badly, sometimes not giving him enough to eat. Except for Mary Anne his would have been a hard life; she slipped a piece of bread into his hand, as he went out after breakfast, when he had not had much of stirabout; and often gave him another piece at night, when he was going to bed.

She taught him his lessons, too, and he began to read tolerably. But the stern mother—the unbelieving mother, who would not recognize the Almighty's hand in the privation of her child—who chose instead to foster the bitter germ of envy, which she always felt towards Tommy, until it became a settled hate. She did not know the Gospel, nor feel "that whom the Lord loveth he often chasteneth;" her proud rebellious heart could not humble itself before God's will; she repined, murmured, and sought for revenge.

So Tommy was ill-treated and beaten ; his food given with a scowl and harsh word—and thus distasteful to him.

No peace at home. Abroad he sought for it, but there was sorrow in his heart. He did not want to play, but wandered by himself, and thought the whole day long; and then went home. No home for him—no kind voice to welcome him—no mother, father, sister, to smile on him as he entered, and make room for him to sit beside them. He came in as stealthily as he could, hoping to escape the notice of all ; and if Mary Anne looked kindly on him, it was but a stolen-sort of glance after all. Willy was now a confirmed cripple, the lower part of his spine much injured, his legs useless and shrunken. He, too, in silence, and almost alone, wandered through life ; lying all day long on his little bed in the inner room ; sorrowful at first, but by degrees recovering his childish spirits, he talked merrily with all who came to see him. At times he suffered much pain, and then it was especially that Tommy felt the sting of Mrs. Connor's tongue. He often heard Willy's voice asking for him, but he never ventured to go into the room.

One day, Mrs. Connor had gone to market, and the two little girls, Nelly and Jane, were outside playing ; Mary Anne was only in the house. Tommy had seen Mrs. Connor going out, and he remained near, and came in after she left.

“ May I go up, Mary Anne ? ” he asked.

“ Yes, dear ; wait till I try is he asleep. No, he’s not. There, go quietly.”

And Tommy walked gently over to the bedside of his little playfellow. Willy had his back rather towards him as he entered ; he turned at the noise.

“ Oh ! Tommy,” he cried, “ is that you ? Why did you never come to see me ? ”

But Tommy was silent ; he was gazing at the wasted little face, once so plump and rosy, and the eyes that looked at him with an unpleasant sort of brilliancy, and the little shrivelled hand held out to him, nothing but skin and bone ; and the large tears rolled down his cheek, and he sobbed aloud.

“ Don’t cry, Tommy alannah, don’t cry ; sure it wasn’t your fault, an’ don’t mind mother—didn’t I do it all myself ? ”

“ Ah ! Willy, I’m very sorry for you, you’re so——” He could not get out the word he wanted, and sobbed more bitterly.

Mary Anne had watched him from the door, and led him away.

“ There, there, ye’ll make Willy worse if ye cry ; go out now and play.”

No, no, he has almost forgotten what play was. He wandered slowly along the canal, his earliest friend ; his crying stopped, and he thought within himself how strong and big he was : And Willy ? His hands, so full and round—poor Willy’s. He able to walk and run. Willy never to run again. And then the kind look came to his mind, which told him that he was not forgotten by the sick boy, and he felt that he had at least one friend in the wide world.

He ran and gathered flowers, shells, and all he could think of that Willy ever looked on. Oh ! hurry to have them in before she comes back. There’s a whole bib-full ; that will do. Now home. A peep in—she was not there.

“ See here, Mary Anne, see here ; something for Willy to play with. Flowers, daisies for chains, and shells and stones for houses, and yellow buttercups, and two roses. See here ; let me bring them in.”

How pleased Willy was ! A little colour came to his

cheek ; he looked on his treasures, and counted them. Then Tommy, by his directions, placed them ; then changed them again, then twined the flowers, then built a house ; and so they played once more together, and the invalid forgot his sickness, and the orphan that he was alone.

In the very middle of the play, the house on the bed finished, and the garden nearly so, Mary Anne rushed in.

“Here’s mother,” she whispered.

Tommy started up ; he was paralysed, he did not know what to do. There was her voice in the kitchen.

“I’ll go under the bed,” cried Tommy.

“No don’t,” said Willy. “What’ll she do ?”

She came in.

“What’s this at all, at all ? Eh !” she shouted at Tommy, who cowered before her. “Did I never tell you not to come in here, you brat ; you didn’t do enough, you think ; you want to make him worse—come here.”

And she caught him, notwithstanding Willy’s cries of “Mother, mother, let him alone ;” and dragging him to the kitchen, beat him till she was tired.

Poor Tommy yelled with pain, and ran from the house as soon as she let him go, but not before he heard Willy’s melancholy voice lamenting for him. It made Willy very ill for a couple of days, but after that he would see Tommy ; no one else should gather flowers for him.

“Sure, Nelly and Jane could come in and play with him,” his mother said.

No ; no one but Tommy ; and he was sent for accordingly. But the mother was jealous of the preference her sick child showed towards him, and treated him worse.

Five years rolled on, and Tommy’s unwearied kindness and thoughtfulness for Willy had not softened Mrs. Connor’s heart. She hated him, and he returned the dislike. *Her blows and angry words brought out all the bad*

points in his human nature. He had little religion. He went sometimes to Mass with the rest, and knew a little of the Roman Catholic Catechism; but for any proper feeling caused by religious instruction, he had none. Not even the kind words of Mary Anne could compensate for the brutality of her mother. All the savageness of his nature was called up. Mrs. Connor abused him, and he answered her again. She kept back his food, he snatched some and ran away.

He was now about ten years old, and was employed to do various little things about the house, which, it must be told, he managed very carelessly.

One day, at dinner, he asked for more potatoes.

"There's none for ye," answered Mrs. Connor.

"There's more in the pot," he replied.

"If there is, they're not for you; you've got your share."

"I've not."

"Don't be answering me. Carry that churn out to the door."

"I'll not."

"Come, be smart about it, or I'll make you hop."

"I won't," he again rejoined.

"You won't!" she cried, rushing at him, and hitting him with the churn-dash on the shoulders.

He screamed with pain, and jumping back to the door, seized a rolling-pin, that lay on a form, and hurled it at her. He saw that she was struck, and ran off. He went over the bridge and up the other side of the canal, and at last stopped, a good way off, and sat down. His back pained him terribly. But he was cool now. He wondered did he hurt her. He ought not to have thrown it.

Hallo! there's Mr. Connor himself and Jack Daly crossing the bridge, and they are after him. He must

run for it—they see him—they are running too. If he could get to the next bridge, there's a hole he knows of in a field, where he could hide. On, on! there's the bridge, and they are a great way behind him. Hurrah! here it is, and the little road—down he turns—they can't see him now—he jumps the ditch, and has reached his hiding-place safely—there he is, quite concealed.



CHAPTER IV.

HEY came to the turn at the bridge and stopped.

"Which way did he go?" asked Connor. "Here k, do you go down the road, an' I'll follow on the al. We'll catch the little rascal, I'll engage; he was much before us."

And they separated; but Tommy still lay hid, and watched them as they went.

Jack Daly did not appear very earnest in the search; sauntered down the lane, and in a few moments came back and sat down on the parapet of the bridge. Shortly after his master joined him out of breath.

"He's not that way," he said. "There's two men, re above, at a ditch, an' they did'nt see him; he must the other way."

"No," answered Jack; "I met a little girl, and she said did'nt go that road; he stooped and crossed the bridge, are say, an' we did'nt see him. God knows where he now; but sure," he continued after a pause, "he'll come back to his supper at night, an' then ye'll have him."

"That's true," responded Connor. "We may as well home."

So the two retraced their steps; but Tommy had no notion of returning.

"He didn't care; he'd go off an' look for work. Could'n't he do something? but he would'n't go back to be beaten."

As soon as they were gone he peered out and got on the road. In his flight he had left his cap behind. No matter, he'd go on without it, and on he went. He skirted the town and pushed on.

Some farmer would want a boy to mind cattle, and would take him; or, maybe, a gentleman, to run of messages for him; sure there were a great many things he could do.

But he must go a great way off as they would give him less about there.

Trudge on still: he could clean knives and shoes, and sweep a floor, and mind an ass, and drive it too.

Push on—push on. He was alone in the world now, but he might be as rich as Mr. Connor yet; he'd hire with some man, and save money, and then he'd buy a boat on the canal, and he'd have a home of his own, and take Willy and Mary Anne home to live with him; then would'n't he make faces at Mrs. Connor.

But stay! How dark it is becoming; what will poor Tommy do for a place to sleep for the night.

However, he did not mind, but walked on manfully; he wished to get a great way off before he stopped. He was now about eight miles from M. —

At last he gave up; it was quite dark, and he was very tired; he would go to the next farm-house and ask for a night's lodging. It was a little way off the road, and a dog sprung at him, barking as he approached.

"Poor fellow, poor fellow," cried Tommy.

"Hallo, who's that," asked a voice from an out-house.

"A little boy, sir, that wants a night's lodgin'."

"We have no lodgin' here for strollers; so be off,

my chap, or I'll set the other dog on you; its too much we lose by the likes of you."

So Tommy retreated, and resumed his journey; he would try the next. It was on the side of the road. He knocked, and a respectable woman opened the door.

"Well, my boy, what do you want?" she asked.

"I'm travellin'," answered Tommy, "and want to know may I stop here for the night?"

"And what makes you be on the road so late ahagar?"

Tommy did not answer directly; at last he said—

"I'm lookin' for a place, ma'am."

"Well, you can't stop here, we've had a great deal stole by lettin' people in for the night that way; so you may go on."

"But sure I would'nt stale," cried Tommy.

"Oh! I dare say not," she said, as she shut the door, and Tommy turned sorrowfully away.

"Oh! dear, what'll I do at all?" he thought to himself; "I'll try another." And on he went for half-a-mile further, and knocked at another house, but was refused there too. "They didn't like strangers." And then another and another—the same result with all; "they had too much stolen lately."

And at the last refusal, as the door was shut in his face, Tommy burst into tears.

"What'll I do, what'll I do?" And on he went, but much more slowly than before. And the wind blew coldly in his face with mizzling rain. He became colder and colder, and in his sorrow forgot to walk fast. He was tired, too, and foot-sore, and very hungry.

"Where shall I sleep to night, nobody will let me in. Oh! I wish I was at home again."

And he sat down against the ditch to cry—and he sat there and cried on.

Two or three passed, but did not mind him. It was raining and very dark.

"Who's that?" a voice asked at length, as a step approached him on the pathway.

"It's me, sir."

"And who are you?"

"A little boy, sir."

"And what are you sitting there for in the wet?"

"I'm a poor boy, travellin', an' they would'nt let me in any place, for they said that every one they let in stole something; an' sure I would'nt stale, an' I've no place to go to to-night."

"Stand up, my boy, till I see you. Why, you are a young fellow to be travelling. Where does your father live?"

"I've no father, sir."

"Well, your mother, then?"

"I've no mother, nayther," said Tommy, crying afresh.

"An orphan; well, who brought you up; where do you come from?"

"From beyant M——, sir; an' she bet me, an' I ran away to look for a place."

"Well, my boy, I can't see your face, but you must not remain here, at all events; follow me, and I'll try and make out a place for you to sleep."

"God bless your honour," said Tommy fervently, as he stopped crying, and started after his guide. They turned up a cross road, and after about half-an-hour's walking, came to a gate through which they passed, and going up a short avenue reached a house.

Tommy's conductor did not go to the hall-door, but entered the yard, and proceeding to the back-door, went into the kitchen.

"Here, Mrs. Armstrong," he said, addressing an elderly

servant who was sitting by the fire, and rose at his entrance, "here is an unfortunate boy I found on the roadside crying, and he has no where to sleep to-night; would you get him something to eat, and tell Williamson to give him a rug, and let him sleep on the hay-loft. You are hungry, I dare say?" he continued, addressing the boy.

"Oh! indeed, sir, I am very hungry."

"Well, so am I; therefore I shall go and get something to eat myself, and change my clothes; Mrs. Armstrong will take care of you, and in the morning I'll hear what you have to say for yourself."

Mrs. Armstrong got him some bread and milk, and he sat down to it in silence. She was very stately at first, but by degrees she thawed towards him, and asked him various questions—"Where he came from?" "what he was going to do?" "and what was his name?" with sundry other interrogatories—and at last told him to draw the table nearer to the fire, and eat his supper comfortably, and finally came and sat down on the other side herself.

Soon after, Williamson, the outside man, came in from the yard, and Mrs. Armstrong held a little private conference with him at the other end of the kitchen.

Tommy caught a few words, as "very cold," "closet," and "blankets," and had some idea that their conversation was about himself. Williamson also condescended to talk to him, and inquired, "If he liked bread and milk, and was he ever on horseback?" To which questions Tommy answered in an affirmative and negative respectively.

Meanwhile Mrs. Armstrong had been bustling about, and had carried a mattress and some blankets into a little room off the kitchen; and at last she asked Tommy would

he like to go to bed? and he having assented, she brought him into the little room, and intimated that the above-mentioned mattress and blankets were for his use.

He soon fell asleep, and dreamed of Willy and their flowers and little houses; then of Mary Anne giving him a bit of bread, without Mrs. Connor knowing it, and letting him to the fire to warm himself; then of Mrs. Connor herself, that she was beating him again with the churn-dash, and that he could not run away; then of the long, dreary road he had travelled, and the people that would not let him in, for fear he would steal something. He thought he was again seeking for admission—knock, knock, knock, at every door, and he awoke.

Where was he? Not on the cold road? Oh! no. The warm bed-clothes were about him; yet there was a knocking somewhere; he listened; yes, there was certainly some one knocking; knock, knock, quite close to him. He listened still; it must be, it was at the window in his room; oh! dreadful! robbers! Still it went on; and occasionally a push was given, and he heard whispers quite distinctly outside.

What should he do? He lay there trembling, while a cold perspiration broke over him.

At last, after another push, the window opened, it had hinges like a door, and he heard a voice in a whisper say—

“Now put Patsy in;” and a boy was lifted up to the window and helped in. “Mind now, Patsy,” continued the same voice, “the scullery-door, at the other side of the kitchen, has the key in it; be smart an’ open it, while we go round.”

What will you do, Tommy? There he is in the room, groping for the door, to let them all in; to rob and

murder, may be, the kind gentleman that took you off the road, when you were cold and hungry ; and the good Mrs. Armstrong, who got you your supper, and would not let you sleep on the loft. He has found the door of the little room, and is out in the kitchen—he will be in the scullery in a moment.

“ I'll not let him,” said Tommy to himself, and sprang out of bed.

Now he is in the kitchen ; the fellow was groping his way towards the scullery ; it was quite dark ; the other boy stopped, so did Tommy ; he moved a little, and Tommy seized him.

“ You shan't ! you shan't ! ” he shouted. “ Help ! help ! help ! robbers ! robbers ! Mrs. Armstrong, come here ! ”

“ Hould yer whist, can't ye,” said his opponent, hastily, “ an' let me out,” and Tommy got a blow on the face that nearly stunned him, but held on, shouting still, as the other boy endeavoured to reach the scullery-door.

“ Help ! help ! I have him ! I have him ! ”

And the blows showered on Tommy's face and head, but he would not let go—the door should not be opened. They are in the scullery now ; they are at the door. Tommy lets go his hold, and takes the key out of the lock. He tried to throw it into a corner, but the other fellow caught his arm and he let it fall—now they fight on the ground ! Tommy holds the key under him, the other has got hold of it.

Pull, pull ! help, help ! Oh ! he has got it ! and they jump up and struggle on !

Hurrah ! hurrah ! There's a light ! and in ran Williamson, followed by Mrs. Armstrong with a candle.

“ Here he is,” cried Tommy ; “ take the key from him ! ”

The culprit was seized and dragged into the kitchen;

and the gentleman entered, in his dressing-gown, to ask what was the noise about There stood Tommy, his face covered with blood, and Williamson with Patsy by the collar ; and Mrs. Armstrong holding the candle in his face and saying, “ Arn’t you a nice boy ? ”



CHAPTER V.

“**W**HAT is all this, Mrs. Armstrong?” asked the gentleman.

“ ‘Deed, sir, I know little more than what you see ; we were near being robbed and murdered, that’s all.’ ”

“ And has this boy anything to say to it?” continued her master, pointing to Tommy.

“ ‘Deed, I believe he has, sir, a great deal ; we found him struggling with this strange boy in the scullery, and he’s all covered with blood, poor fellow.’ ”

“ Well, my man, what do you know of the business?”

So Tommy related what has been already told in the preceding chapter ; and they all went to the little room and found the window open, as he described it.

“ And he was to have opened the scullery-door for his companions?” still questioned the gentleman.

“ Yes, sir, an’ all I could do he got to the door in spite of me ; I then took out the key, and wanted to throw it in a corner, but he cotcht me, and it fell on the flur but he got it ; and only them came in he’d have the door open.”

“ And you actually fought this big boy by yourself?”

“ Ah ! sir, don’t you see his face?” interposed Mrs. Armstrong.

"Indeed I do, get some water and wash it, pray ; and Williamson, nail up that window in the little room, and lock that boy up in the pantry till morning ; tie his hands also, you had better. Yes, indeed, my poor boy, your face is terribly cut," he continued, turning to Tommy, who was being washed by Mrs. Armstrong ; "you are a very brave fellow, and we have all reason to be greatly obliged to you ; get to bed, however, now, and we'll talk over the matter in the morning. Mrs. Armstrong don't look so frightened, there is no danger now, so go to bed again. Williamson, when you secure your prisoner, come up to me for a brace of pistols, and I must ask you to remain on the watch till day-light; I will go round the house, and fire a gun out of the upper windows." He then left the kitchen.

"Well, boy," said Mrs. Armstrong, to Tommy, after he was gone, "it was God Almighty that sent you here this night to save our lives ; was there many in it ?"

"I don't know," answered he ; "I only heard one voice, but there was a good many feet movin' round to the door."

"Wasn't it a mercy they didn't get in ! and only for you they would. Oh ! what's that ? dear me, I'm quite nervous after it; were they robbers only, or White-feet, do you think ?"

"What is White-feet ?" asked Tommy.

"Oh, bad people ; it's hard to say what they are, but I thought it might be them, as the master's a clergyman."

"Oh ! is he a priest ?" cried Tommy.

"A priest ! not he indeed ; he's a good Protestant clergyman ; you never heard of a priest of the name of Stewart, I suppose ?"

"Oh ! his name's Stewart ?"

"An' didn't ye know that before? you're a Roman Catholic?" she continued, after a pause.

"Yes, ma'am," answered Tommy.

"Well, you're a brave good boy, no matter what you are, an' I pray God may bless you for this night's work; there now, go to bed an' sleep sound after your fight." And our hero was once more sound asleep.

Williamson went off early the next morning for the police, into whose charge master Patsy was delivered. He had maintained a dogged silence until they arrived, but he then, with tears, declared, "that he could not help it, his father made him." However, he would give no information as to who his father was, or where he himself came from. The outside of the house was examined, and the marks of a good number of feet perceived outside the little window; the sizes of some of the shoes were taken, and the police marched off their prisoner.

Mrs. Armstrong took good care of Tommy that morning; it was tea and bread and butter he had, with a nice fresh egg, and was admitted to the same table with herself, and heard Mr. Stewart's whole history—"that he was curate for a gentleman that was away sick, and that was the glebe-house; and that he was a very good young man, and was very rich, gave a great deal to the poor, and did 'a power' of good in the parish;" and Tommy in his turn had to relate the whole encounter of the previous night. After breakfast the bell rang.

"That's for you," said Mrs. Armstrong; "he told me to send you up, when you were done. Oh! never mind your face, it is swelled to be sure; but doesn't he know how you came by it?" And she showed him up to the parlour.

"Well, my good boy," said Mr. Stewart, as he entered, "we owe you a great deal for your courage last night;

come now, sit down there, and tell me all about yourself. What is your name? I don't think I learned that last night."

So Tommy recounted his little history, why his name was Waters, and how Willy was hurt, and how Mrs. Connor treated him very badly, and he was obliged to run away.

" You have been brought up a Roman Catholic?"

" I believe so, sir," said Tommy.

" Do you know the meaning of Catholic?"

" Yes sir, a man that's not a Protestant?"

" Well; and what's a Protestant?"

" Them that goes to church, sir."

" Yes, certainly; but do you know, Tommy, what is the use of religion?"

" Religion, sir; why I suppose, sir, it makes people go to mass."

" No; for instance I don't go to mass."

" Oh! well, you go to church, sir."

" And is it all the same, do you think, where I go?"

Tommy twisted his fingers, but did not reply.

" Well, why don't you answer?"

" The chapel's the best, sir," at length he said.

" Now, why do you think that it is better to go to chapel?"

And Tommy was silent again.

" You don't know? Well, I hope you will think on my question, and be able to give me an answer, when next we speak on the subject. In the meantime I must consider about getting you some work—what can you do?"

" Many a thing, sir; I can run of messages, an' dig, an' work, an' mind an ass."

" Can you mind sheep or cows?"

" Bedad I could, sir."

"What do you mean by that word you use, Tommy, 'bedad?'"

"Bedad, is it, sir? Faix I dunna what's the mainin' of it."

"Perhaps, then, you know the meaning of 'faix?'"

"Nor that naythur, sir."

"Is it not foolish, then, for you to use words of which you do not know the meaning? 'Bedad' is a corruption of 'begad,' and that is the same as, 'By God.' Did you ever hear that it was wrong to take the name of God in vain, Tommy?"

"Oh! yes, sir; that's the second commandment in the catechism."

"No; it is the third; and when you use God's holy name, or any contraction; or change of it, lightly; or when you ought not to use it, then you are 'taking God's name in vain.'"

"Is that it, sir?"

"Yes, and the other word you used, 'faix,' is another way of saying 'faith.' Now, the word faith is generally applied to the belief that Christians have in Jesus Christ, that He died on the cross for them, that they may go to heaven when they die themselves; such a word which causes such holy feelings in a true Christian's mind, ought not to be used on every occasion, and especially when the meaning is not known. This being Saturday, I shall be very busy all day; but on Monday, please God, I hope to see about getting some work for you; in the meantime Williamson will show you a place in the garden where you may weed till dinner-time; and if you like to go to chapel to-morrow, he will show you the way there; he goes to church himself, however."

And Tommy went down stairs. He said nothing at all about *chapel in the kitchen*, but remained all day on

Sunday with Mrs. Armstrong, and was greatly pleased with various little stories she read him from the New Testament ; and he read a little for her himself.

The day was wet and windy, and Mr. Stewart was sitting at an early dinner, between the services, when a loud knocking was heard at the hall-door, and Mrs. Armstrong entered the parlour, very pale.

“A sad accident, sir, has happened.”

“What is it ?” said her master, standing up.

“Ben Fisher, sir, and Ned Ellis went out to shoot, and the gun went off, and poor Ned is killed ;” and the old woman began to cry.

“Sabbath-breaking, Mrs. Armstrong ; it’s a warning to all who forget the commands of God. Who is at the door ?” he asked, putting on his outside coat.

“Two men, sir, they are carrying him home, and wanted you to see him ; he’s not quite dead yet.”

“Oh ! not dead ; tell Williamson to ride off as hard as he can for Dr. Townsend, and bring him to Ellis’s. Well, my friends,” he continued, going to the door, “where is this unfortunate boy ?”

“They’re carrying him slowly home, your Reverence, but we can overtake them across the fields.”

There was the boy supported in the arms of two men, a third walking after, carrying a gun, and another boy beside them crying bitterly.

“Bear him gently,” said the clergyman, as he came up ; “four of us had better take him ; here Roberts, you and I will take his feet—where is he hit ?”

“We don’t know, your Reverence, we are carrying him home first ; but doesnt’ he moan terrible ?”

“Don’t cry, Ben, my boy ; how did it happen ?”

“Oh, sir,” sobbed Ben, “don’t blame me, it wasnt’ my fault, I could not help it ; we were gettin’ down a ditch,

an' he went first, an' as I handed him the gun, my foot tripped, an' she went off, an' hot him;" and he cried bitterly again.

"A sad warning to you, and all Sabbath-breakers, Ben; and I trust in God that it will be to you a lesson for the remainder of your life. What a strong smell of whiskey there is from him," he observed, turning to the men.

"A bottle in his pocket broke, sir, as we took him up, an' there was spirits in it, I believe."

"Oh! Ben, Ben, this is very bad; no wonder you tripped. Where did he get the whiskey?"

"He got it at home, an' we only took a sup when we felt cold."

They got out on the road, and approached the house, the inmates little thinking of the message they were bringing them; a few more joined them.

"Go on, sir," said Roberts, "and break it to the mother; Tom Kelly will take your place."

There was loud talking within as he approached. The father, a little tipsy, was abusing the wife and daughter, about his "dinner not being comfortable." "It's hard for it to be comfortable when you won't come in to it," was answered sulkily.

"I must have it comfortable;" and a porringer was flung in passion on the floor.

"Ellis, Ellis," said Mr. Stewart, entering hastily, "is this conduct for Sunday? Is it not enough to cause the Almighty to come Himself to reprove you; there losing the temper which He has given you to keep, breaking His holy Sabbath. See, He has sent a message to you."

The wounded son was borne in, and the father shrunk back horrified on a seat; the mother screamed, and fell fainting in her daughter's arms, while Mr. Stewart proceeded to undress the boy, and see where the charge had entered

CHAPTER VI.

THE shot had lodged in his left breast, carrying with it a portion of his dress ; he breathed heavily, with closed eyes, as they carried him home. He was partially undressed and laid on a bed ; his mother was recovering from her fainting fit in the kitchen, attended by some of the neighbouring women, who came in, one by one. The father leaned beside the bed, watching his son's face with a look of agony. Mr. Stewart wiped the wound with a towel, and endeavoured to stop the flow of blood ; the boy still lay motionless.

"My friends," said the clergyman at last, "the case is in God's hands, and we, unskilled in surgery, can do nothing. There is only one thing which may be of use, and I trust you will all join me in that : we can pray, my friends, that the Almighty, in His mercy, will please to spare this boy's life. Ellis," he went on, "will you kneel with me ?"

"Ay, sir, let us, in God's name."

And all in the room knelt before the Deity, and the clergyman offered up a suitable prayer in the Saviour's name.

Mr. Stewart observed, as he concluded, that the sufferer's lips moved ; and as the prayer ended, he opened his eyes.

"Oh ! sir," he said in a low voice, articulating with difficulty, "I heard you. Oh ! yes, Sunday. Oh ! God, pain here. Oh ! oh ! I'm—I'm very sorry. I deserve it. Oh ! father, dear—take—warning. Mr. Stewart—sir—will—I—go—to hell?"

"Dear Edward," answered the clergyman, in tears, "be sorry for your sins ; believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will, indeed, be saved."

"I—I—am—sorry—very sorry. I believe that—Jesus—died—for me. Oh ! Christ, save me."

He ceased, and "Amen" was fervently uttered by those around. The eyes closed again. He stretched down his legs, breathed thickly for a few seconds ; a gurgle in his throat, and all was still.

The clergyman felt his pulse, and stooped over him, but life was extinct. "Come, Ellis," he said to the afflicted father, "there is no use in staying here, let us go and comfort your wife."

"I must go see my boy," they heard on entering the kitchen, in heart-rending accents, "I must give him one last kiss."

"That will not bring him back to life, Mrs. Ellis," said the clergyman, gently taking her hand ; "wait for a little, and then you shall go in. In the meanwhile, you and your husband can come into this other room, and I'll read you words of sweeter comfort than I can give you."

And he retired with them, and they listened to part of the eleventh chapter of St. John, and part of the fifteenth of the First Corinthians, on which portions he spoke, applying the wholesome medicine to them, until the bell rang for evening service.

In the morning, Mr. Stewart again visited Ellis's; the mother was in deep affliction still, and hardly able to think composedly ; the father spoke rationally on the

subject. "It has given me a lesson, sir, I wanted badly. God knows if I had been taken in the same way, where my soul would have gone ; I have to thank God for the warning, sir, though it's hard to bear ; the poor boy," he added, his eyes filling with tears, "wasn't it a blessed thing to hear him speaking about Christ, just before he died. I tould the woman, an' it aized her mind greatly. But I don't know how we'll get on without the poor fellow at-all, he was so handy and willin'."

"You would, then, be likely to want a boy, Ellis?" inquired the clergyman.

"We'd want one sartinly, sir ; but we wouldn't get one without the hire ; so we must want him I'm afeard."

"There is a boy at the glebe just now, for whom I am anxious to get a place. I have some reason to think he is honestly disposed ; if you will take him on trial, I would be obliged to you ; and if he answers you, I will take care of his wages and clothes, on condition that you let him to school for a day, or half a day, when he can be spared."

"Any one that your Reverence recommends, would answer us, I'm sure."

"Oh ! don't misunderstand me ; I only ask you to try him for a month say."

"Well, sir, I'll be very glad ; it's fair enough ; he's a Protestant, I suppose?"

"No, Ellis, he is a Romanist, and very ignorant ; I further hope that, while he is with you, as far as your ability goes, you will endeavour to enlighten him."

"That I will, sir, with God's help. I see things differently now from what I used."

After the funeral, on Tuesday morning, Mr. Stewart sent for Tommy. "Well, Thomas, can you tell me now, whv you think it best to go to chapel?"

"I don't know, sir, but I think it's right."

"Well, tell me, what do you go to chapel for?"

"To pray, sir."

"To whom do you pray?"

"To God, sir."

"Now, Thomas, answer me truly, whenever you have been in chapel, did you pray to God?"

Tommy looked down. "The priest prayed, sir, an' that was all one."

"And did you understand what he was saying?"

"No, sir; sure it's Latin he does be talkin'."

"And you don't know Latin. Now, Thomas, tell me, do you think that God understands English?"

"I think He would, sir."

"Well, if the priest wanted to offer *your* prayers to God, ought not he to speak in the language you and every one who goes to chapel in this country understands, and not in Latin, which few know anything about? Did you ever hear of St. Paul, Thomas?"

"I did, sir; he was a saint."

"Yes, he was an apostle of our Saviour; and here is your own Roman Catholic Testament, and in it St. Paul writes, in the first letter he wrote to the Corinthians, chapter xiv. 6-22 verses, speaking of teaching, he says, 'Except you utter by the tongue *plain* speech, how shall it be known what is said?' Then verse 16, especially alluding to prayer, he says, 'How shall he that holdeth the place of the unlearned say, *Amen* to the blessing, because *he knoweth not what thou sayest?* for thou, indeed, givest thanks well, but the other is not edified. But *in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that I may instruct others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue.*' Now, Thomas, you don't know what the priest says, or when to say *Amen*."

"Oh! it would be better if he prayed in English, certainly sir."

"Well, I'm glad you think so, Thomas; and I'll lend you this Roman Catholic Testament, and there are various places marked in it, which you can read if you like. You will be glad to hear that I have got a place for you, with the father of the poor boy who was shot on Sunday, Edward Ellis; he will take you for a month on trial, and you are to go to him to-day; Williamson will show you where he lives."

"Oh! I know, sir; Mrs. Armstrong brought me down after you on Sunday evening."

"I hope you profited by the melancholy sight. I shall be always glad to see you, when you can get leave to come up, and tell me how you like the book I am lending you. Ellis will allow you, I dare say, to go to school occasionally; and Mrs. Armstrong is gone to see about some clothes for you; if you are a good boy, I shall give you a present occasionally."

"Oh! thank you, sir," said Tommy; and his heart was full; "God bless you; I'm glad I ran away any how."

"There now," rejoined Mr. Stewart, smiling, "you may go."



CHAPTER VII.

TOMMY was received very kindly by the Ellises ; their hearts were bowed down by grief ; and his coming to supply the boy's place, who had been taken from them, drew the kindly feelings of all towards him. Ellis himself patted him on the head, and observed, "that he was a little small, but sure he'd mend of that every day;" and Mrs. Ellis questioned him about himself, and where he came from, and cried, and mourned occasionally, as she thought of her own son taken away.

There was no work for him that day, but he showed himself inclined to be useful—helped Maria, the eldest girl, in with turf; went for water of his own accord, and did a great many little things, so thoughtfully and well, as to win the hearty commendation of Sally Kehoe, a poor woman, of the neighbourhood, who had been engaged for a few days, in consequence of a death in the house.

Towards evening she asked Tommy to come help her in with a tub of water for the night; as she filled it at the little stream, she observed—"Well, Mr. Stewart is a nice man."

"He is," answered Tommy.

"Are you with him long?"

"No," answered Tommy.

"That was a fine address he gave, any way, at the funeral ; did you go into the church ?"

"I did."

"You're a Protestant, then ?"

"No, I'm not," answered Tommy.

"Well, an' what brought you into the church ?"

"What harm ?" asked Tommy, innocently.

"What harm is it ! I wished Father Doyle heard you, an' he'd tache you the differ."

"An' who's Father Doyle ?"

"He's the Catholic curate of the parish, an' an illegant man he is, too, God bless him."

"But, Sally, tell us what harm is there in going to church ?"

"Sure you oughtn't to pray or listen to heretics, or ye'll go to hell, as sure as you're stanin' there."

"An' what's a heretic, Sally ?"

"A heretic is one that won't hear the Church, as our Saviour commanded all Christians to do, nor won't honour the Blessed Virgin, nor go to confession. God help you, you cratur, but you want tachin' mighty bad."

They returned to the house, and the conversation was not resumed.

A little before bed-time Mrs. Ellis said to her husband — "Will you read a chapter to-night, Thomas, and have prayers ?"

"With all my heart, Eliza; this message from the Almighty will remind us all what we ought to do ; and one thing certainly we mustn't neglect, which I did for certain, and that is the Word of God. Tommy," he continued, "I know you're not a Protestant, but I'm sure you have no objection to hear God's book read ; we're going up to the room, if you like to come ?"

"Yes, sir," he answered, "I'll go ;" at the same time

he saw Sally making signs to him ; she was apparently very busy at the other side of the kitchen, so much occupied, it would seem, that she could not go up at all. Tommy made no reply to the strenuous signs of Sally that he should not go; he looked round to see was she observed by any of the rest, and finding that she had not been, followed the family. Tommy liked what he had heard of the Bible very much ; the nice stories that Mrs. Armstrong had selected for him, made him feel as if he wished to take the book to some quiet place, and read it all through himself.

The chapter that Ellis chose this evening was the 14th of St. John's Gospel. The mention of "God's house" caught Tommy's attention at the first verse ; and a wondering idea stole into his mind, inquiring what sort of place was this house. Tommy was curious, too, as he heard that "Jesus was the way, the truth, and the life ; and that no man came unto the Father but by him." He did not quite understand it though : but he found a little corner for it in the cavern of memory, and left it there for future use. "If ye love me, keep my commandments," struck clear on his understanding. "I wonder," he thought, "is there any harm in listening to that?" Then when the verse about the Comforter was read, Mrs. Ellis sobbed aloud, and her husband's voice trembled, and failed him, as he read, "I will not leave you comfortless." And Tommy thought that it surely must be a comfort to have God's book to read when one was sorry. And then they knelt for prayer. (It was the same room in which poor Ned had died, and where Mr. Stewart had prayed before the boy had opened his eyes. Tommy had been present also, for Mrs. Armstrong had brought him down.) Ellis commenced—"Almighty and most merciful Father, we have erred and strayed," but the poor fellow could get no

further ; his voice was choked with sobs, and handing the book to his daughter, he told her to read.

Sally remonstrated with Tommy the next day, in private, and he was rather inclined to turn a deaf ear to her ; but the awe with which he had been taught from his earliest years to regard a priest, was predominant in his mind ; and he certainly quailed at the thoughts of this Father Doyle of whom Sally constantly spoke.

Things went on this way till Sunday. On Friday, Sally was no longer wanted, and was sent home, taking an opportunity of whispering to Tommy, before she went, "that unless he wanted his soul to go to hell for ever, he wouldn't go in to prayers." This was said in a solemn tone of voice by Sally, as if she was in earnest ; and being often repeated, Tommy's mind became influenced, and almost unconsciously he began to attach some weight to her words. When the hour for prayers came, accordingly, he got very uneasy, and managed to slip out, just as they went into the room. There was no observation made; but on Saturday evening, Ellis took him short, a little before the usual time, and said, that "he would read by the fire in the kitchen that night." Tommy could not decently go out, as he had voluntarily attended before.

On Sunday morning, as he was doing something about the yard, Sally Kehoe came up to him—"Ye're goin' to chapel to-day, Tommy, alannah?" she inquired.

"I don't know," he answered, "may be they'll want me at home."

"Sure, man, they never hinder any one of goin' to their prayers of a Sunday ; so come along, we'll just be in time for ten o'clock mass."

"I couldn't go this way, though, till I clane myself, and dress ; wait till I show you the fine shute of clothes Mr. Stewart gave me."

"That's to coax you to go to church."

"No, it isn't; he never said a word to me about it; an' didn't he give me lave to go to chapel this day-week?"

"Well, make haste now, or we'll be late; I'll stop at my cousin's, Biddy Murphy's, and you can wash yourself there, an' her son will lind you his jacket and cap; come on, now."

"No, I can't, Sally, till I ax lave."

"Arrah bad scran to you, is to ax lave to go to chapel? Well, afther all, may be it's best; wait there and I'll ax; they'll not refuse me."

"Good Morrow, Maria, is your mother down yet?" she asked of the eldest girl, who was preparing the breakfast.

"Well, thank you, Sally, she's up in the room."

"Well, slip up, like a good girl, and say that Tommy Waters bid me ux lave for him to go to prayers with me, as he doesn't know the way by himself, an' we'll be back by one o'clock."

An answer was given in the affirmative, which being communicated to Tommy, he dressed himself, and set out with Sally for the town. When mass was over, Sally entrusted Tommy to a neighbour, who, she said, would show him the way home, and went herself round the chapel to the door of the sacristy.

After church, Mr. Stewart called on the Ellises, who had all been at church, except Mrs. Ellis, whose grief was still very great. He spoke very kindly to them all, and recommended Mrs. Ellis to go to evening service, and "in her Father's house ask Him to alleviate her grief." Ellis walked with the clergyman as he went towards the glebe.

"I hope you are satisfied with the boy I sent you?" asked the latter, as they left the house.

"Why yes, sir, I've no fault with him; he appears willing and active enough."

“How was it I did not see him to-day?”

“Well, I don’t know, sir; he was in the kitchen before your Reverence came in, and when I notice next, he was gone; it just struck me that he ran out when he saw you. He was at chapel this mornin’, and a reason to suspect that a Roman girl that does belong to the house, has put somethin’ into his head about religion, and may be that’s it; I just thought he was slow attendin’ family prayer these two evenins’ back.”

“And so you have prayers at last, Ellis; I am sir glad of it, and hope that the Almighty will send His Spirit, and enable you to continue such a good course. You have the Bible read, of course?”

“Oh! yes, sir, that of course. We had it first up in the room; thin I thought there might be some excuse by Tommy not to come up, so I have it now in the kitchen, an’ them that doesn’t like it may go out.”

“An excellent arrangement. Have you yet had opportunity of speaking to Tommy about the difference between the Romish creed and ours?”

“No, sir; an’ to say the truth, I’d almost be sorry for I know so little about either, I’m ashamed to say.”

“I just thought of that, my good fellow, so I put a little book in my pocket for you. This is a small pamphlet preached by Archbishop Whately on Infallibility, which cuts at the very root of Popery. Our infallible gospels are based on the Bible. ‘The Church’ is only a teacher, who poor Romanist thinks can never be in error. This is a small book, asking—‘Why does your priest forbid us to read the Bible?’ and this is a ‘Hand-book to the Irish Controversy,’ by the Rev. Dr. Stanford, an excellent reference book; the quotations being from the Douay and Rofane books. Have you one?”

“No, your Reverence.”

"Well, I shall send you one, and I hope God will help you in your studies; for 'unless the Lord keep the house, their labour is but lost that build it.' What day could you send Tommy to school this week?"

"Let me see, sir; I think I could send him on Wednesday."

"I want to see him there, and arrange for him to come to me on Thursday evening. You could let him come to me once or twice a-week in the evenings?"

"Oh! yes, sir, certainly."

"Well, good evening, Ellis; try and bring your wife to church this evening."



CHAPTER VIII.

GN the following Tuesday, Ellis went into the neighbouring market-town to sell some wheat, and took his wife along with him, hoping that the stir and bustle would do her good. So they sent for Sally Kehoe to mind the house, while they were away. Tommy was busy about the yard; and about the middle of the day, Sally ran out to him.

"There, Tommy, alannah!" she cried, "there is a gentleman gone up the road, that wants to speake to you; run round the house by the gate, an' ye'll overtake him; make haste."

"Which way?" asked Tommy.

"Oh! he's walking slowly, ye'll see him as you go out."

And as Tommy reached the road, he saw a tall man, with a long black coat on him, a little way past the house; he ran up to him, and touching his cap, asked—

"You're the gentleman wants to speak to me, sir."

"You are the boy living at Ellis's?" asked the long-coated gentleman, in a deep voice, that made Tommy feel queer. "You were at chapel on Sunday, I think?"

"Yes, sir."

"Did you see me there?"

Tommy ventured to raise a corner of his eye to the tall stranger, and answered—"No, sir."

"What!" said the big man in a loud voice, "did'nt I officiate at mass and preach? Answer me truly, now, and look up; did'nt you see me on Sunday?"

"I believe so, sir," muttered Tommy.

"You believe so. Do you believe is it true, that you go down on your knees with heretics; do you believe is that true?"

"They're only Protestants," said Tommy, softly.

"Only Protestants! and what's a Protestant but a heretic?—a heretic that'll go to the hottest place hell has. And do you know where you'll go to, if you say your prayers with heretics, and read the Bible?"

"No, sir," said Tommy, trembling."

"Then I'll tell you, you'll go to hell; not to purgatory at all, but to hell for all eternity; and if I hear of you doing the like again, I'll warn you from the altar, and call out your name. Do you hear that, you young rascal."

"Oh! don't, your Reverence," said Tommy, dropping on his knees, quite frightened at the loud voice and furious look of his companion; "don't, an' I'll niver do it again."

"It's well you thought of giving me my title. I'll think of it; but mind that I see you every Sunday in the chapel; and the less you have to say to Mr. Stewart the better for you; mind that too."

So saying, the reverend gentleman went on his way, and Tommy returned to his work.

When Ellis came home in the evening he was tired, but got the Bible on being reminded of family devotion by his wife. Tommy, however, had an opportunity of going out unobserved. He was sent to school on the day

following; and Mr. Stewart on his daily visit saw him there.

"Well, Tommy," he asked, "how do you get on? What do you think of this boy, Jackson?" he said, turning to the school-master.

"He appears to be smart enough, sir; he can read a little, but knows nothing at all of writing or figures."

"You must work hard now, Tommy, and improve yourself, every day that you are at school. You may come up to the glebe to-morrow evening, and I'll examine you as to what you know."

On the evening of that day, Ellis, who had remarked Tommy's absence on the one preceding, told him "to wait in the house, and not be runnin' out just as they were goin' to prayers." Tommy hung his head, but did not answer. He continued, however, to get near the door; and when Ellis began to read the chapter for the evening, slipped to the other side of the wooden screen, and went out.

"I must stop, exclaimed Ellis, "and have that fellow back; just wait a bit."

And he went into the yard, and called Tommy. There was no answer; but on going to the barn door, he heard a noise in the straw, and concluded that he was there. "Come out here, Tommy," he said. "What's the raison," he continued angrily, as the boy approached him slowly, "that you don't wait for prayers, whin I bid you? Sure you don't mane to say that you're afraid to hear the Word God read? come on in this minit." /

"Oh! Mr. Ellis, sir, don't ax me," said Tommy, piteously, "I can't, indeed."

"None of your nonsense I tell you; come in with me."

"I darint do it, Mr. Ellis, I darint do it," answered

Tommy, beginning to cry, and falling on his knees, "don't ax me, for I could'nt."

"Oh! very well, follow your own road; but wait till Mr. Stewart hears of it." So saying, Ellis returned to the house.

The next day he saw the clergyman, and related what had occurred. "The Papist dhrop is in him, sir; you might as well be talking to the wall."

"Of ourselves, or by our own learning, Ellis, we can never hope to do anything; we must pray to God for all we want, in faith, nothing doubting His power. We may, indeed, sow and water, but 'tis He alone can give the increase. Take no notice whatever of Tommy for the present; but let him come up to me as often as you can in the evenings. I am sorry you threatened to complain to me; you know I have no authority over the boy, and it may prevent him coming to me this evening as I told him. Where is he working to-day?"

"At the hape of stuff, sir, behind the yard."

"Well, I am going down to see your wife, and shall speak to him; but let things just rest as they are for the present."

Mr. Stewart took an opportunity of casually walking near where Tommy was working. "That's right, Tommy," he cried, "hard at work, I see; well, how do you like school?"

"Very well, sir."

"You are coming up to me this evening, are you not?"

"Yes, sir."

"You had better, then, bring the books which Mr. Jackson gave you yesterday; and be with me about seven."

Tommy went to the Glebe, having first asked Ellis's permission, much indeed to the latter's surprise. Tommy

himself had some misgivings as to Mr. Stewart's ulterior designs upon him; and, in consequence of what the priest had said, thought that he ought not to go. However, his wish to learn overcame any qualms of conscience; and he comforted himself by reflecting, that as it was after dark, no one would know "a haporth about it." The Clergyman did not introduce the subject of religion as Tommy anticipated. He made him read and spell, make some figures, and write a little. And having appointed him lessons to learn, he dismissed him kindly, praising him for his attention, and lending him a little story-book to read. He told him to come again on Monday evening, if he could manage it.

Thus everything went on. Tommy attended regularly twice a week at the Glebe, and the Clergyman became much interested by the assiduity and diligence of the boy. He went to school, also, as often as Ellis could spare him; and he occasionally, now that no compulsion was used, remained to hear the Bible read at family prayer. Mr. Stewart, through the long winter evenings, kept him well supplied with amusing and instructive books, which opened his mind, and taught him to reflect; and his thirst for reading so increased, that whenever he had not a story-book, he took the Douay Testament, which Mr. Stewart had lent him, and read different parts where the leaves were turned down.

Christmas came and went, and the deep snow that fell melted down, and the thick ice on which the schoolboys skated along the canal, cracked, and broke, and vanished. Long January passed, and little February, and sturdy March, and Tommy still attended Mr. Stewart, and his affection for the Clergyman increased. The awe he felt at first wore off; and after the lessons were said, they spoke familiarly together. The boy

exhibited surprising genius; he had a wonderful memory; no task was too difficult for him; and Mr. Stewart felt a deep interest in his clever pupil, whose birth and parentage were wrapped in mystery; for Tommy had told him all he heard of his supposed mother's death.



CHAPTER IX.

"It was in April, when their lessons were over, that Mr. Stewart soon after answering Mr. Stewart soon after he had told, suddenly turned pale and said—

"Who wrote the Bible, sir?"

The lawyer smiled as he replied. "The words were written by men inspired or taught by God's Holy Spirit."

"But why is it called 'God's Word' sir, if it is?"

"Because God taught them: God spoke to their minds by His Spirit—and they wrote words."

Apostles were, I will demand from him the same proof before I believe him."

"But sure, sir, the priests work miracles."

"Did you ever see them working one, Thomas?"

"No, sir, but I heard tell of them."

"Well, Thomas, you are old enough to understand how easy it is to deceive those who are very ignorant; and on such an important subject you surely will admit that we ought, if possible, to have better evidence than that of Hearsay; you ought *to see* some one of the miracles before you believe that they can be worked. Now did you ever see a priest work a miracle?"

"No, sir."

"Did any of the people who have told you of all these things, ever see a miracle?"

"I believe not, sir."

"Well, Thomas, the truth of a priest being inspired as the Apostles were, rests on a very slight foundation; while from many sources, Jewish and Heathen, we have evidence that the Apostles wrote the portions of the Scripture imputed to them, and performed the miracles related therein."

"Oh! I believe what's in the Bible, sir, is very good, but—but"—

"But what, Thomas?"

"Father Dunne, sir, said last Sunday that the Bible was very good, but it was nothing without the Church, and that there was no use in any one readin' it, for the Church would tell them what was in it and explain it, and that would do as well; and that we would only get confused and in doubt if we read it by ourselves—and it was from readin' it, he said, sir, that there were so many sects and parties in religion."

"Well, Thomas, there were sects and parties in religion

in the days of the *Apostles themselves*; and the New Testament contains many warnings that there would be such in the Church to the end of time. See here what St. Paul says in Romans xvi. 17—‘*Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions.....and avoid them*;’ also 1 Cor. i. 10—‘Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you.’.....(11)—‘*For it hath been declared unto me, my brethren, by those which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you.*’ In chapter xi. of the same epistle he says, in reproof—‘*I hear that there be divisions among you.*’ From these passages and others, Thomas, we learn that there were dissenters in the first years of Christianity; and if, in consequence of the sects and parties which now exist, it is argued that the Bible should not be read for fear of producing such divisions, the same line of reasoning would induce us to say that Christ should not have come at all, or have sent messengers to preach ‘the glad tidings of great joy’ to the whole world, because there were some who might not heed the intelligence, or only receive it partially. Now with regard to the prophecies that there would certainly be divisions in the Christian Church, we have our Saviour’s own words telling us that He came ‘*not to send peace on earth but a sword*’—that is dissensions arising from the Gospel preached. St. Paul says (1 Cor. xi. 19)—‘*that there MUST be heresies (or sects) that they which are approved may be made manifest.*’ And he says in the Acts of the Apostles, xx. 29-31, ‘*I know this, that after my departing, shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock, ALSO OF YOUR OWN SELVES, shall men arise speaking perverse things, to draw away DISCIPLES after them. THEREFORE WATCH.*’ And in 2 Cor. xi. 13, he speaks of ‘*False apostles, deceitful workers transforming themselves into apostles of Christ*

and ministers of righteousness,' even as 'Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light.' All through his letter to the Galatians there are similar cautions. The Philippians are warned of the same danger in chapter iii. Timothy and Titus are repeatedly exhorted to watch against these corruptions ; and the Apostle Peter also cautions the disciples against those 'unlearned and unstable' persons who 'wrest the Scriptures to their own damnation.' (2 Peter iii. 16.) Now, Thomas, suppose I received a letter from Moore, who went to America last August, with one side to myself saying how well he was, and another side to his wife and children telling them he had a nice place bought, and was going to send for them, would it be right for me to keep both sides of that letter myself, and just tell Mrs. Moore what was in it?"

"No, sir. I think she'd like to read it herself."

"But perhaps there might be some hard words in it that she could not understand, and then she could not know what her husband wanted to tell her."

"Oh ! but, sir, she could understand part of it, and when she came to a hard word she could come an' ask the manin' of it."

"Very good, Thomas, I quite agree with you ; and when our God and Father in heaven writes to us, His children, a letter in the Bible, ought not every one to read it, and when they came to a part that they could not understand, then they could go to the clergyman and ask the meaning of it."

"But, sir, the Bible is very different from a common letter, an' sure the priest ought to know best what we ought to read ; sure we're told to hear the Church."

"Now, Thomas, which would you mind St. Paul or the priest most?"

"St. Paul, sir, of course."

"Well, in all the passages that I have just shown you,

in which St. Paul speaks of false teachers which should arise in the Church, does he say that there will be none in his own time?"

"No, sir. You read out that he was angry with the Corinthians because there were divisions amongst them."

"Does he say that in any point of doubt or difficulty a reference should be made to St. Peter or his successor?"

"No, sir."

"Does he say that he will have a successor, who would teach them when he is gone?"

"No, sir."

"Does he tell them to go to any city, Jerusalem or Rome, and seek for a guide who could not make a mistake?"

"No, sir; not in what you read."

"Does he tell them to collect all the clergy together, and whatever the most of them would say was sure to be right?"

"No, sir, I think not."

"Well, what does he tell them to do in all these divisions which were surely to take place?"

"I don't recollect, sir."

"Find out the xxth chapter of the Acts, and read the 28th, 29th, 30th, and 31st verses. Well, what does he tell the Elders of Ephesus to do when the 'grievous wolves' should enter in 'after his departure?'"

"To watch, sir."

"Excellent, Thomas. And what does he tell them in the 28th verse?"

"To take heed to themselves, sir."

"Very good, indeed. He does not tell them of a 'Church,' Thomas, or Peter, or the successor of Peter, or any of the other Apostles, or any collection of clergy; but he tells them TO TAKE HEED TO THEMSELVES; he ex-

horts them to WATCH, and remember his warnings. Now, Thomas, if God had provided the safeguard you speak of, 'the Church,' on which alone we were to trust and take no trouble of thinking for ourselves; if St. Paul had known of any set of men, of any priest or bishop, who would be a sure guide against all error and corruption, would he not have been certain, on such an occasion as this mentioned in the 20th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, to have given notice of it?"

"I think so, sir."

"Would he have been doing his duty, Thomas, if he had known of such a safeguard, and *not* to have told about it?"

"It's odd, sir, certainly, that he didn't spake of 'the Church.'"

"Do you really think, Thomas, that he was, as he declares himself to be, 'free from the blood of all men,' if knowing a safe port for the vessel of the Church exposed to such imminent danger, he concealed it?"

"If he knew it, sir, an' didn't tell it, I don't think it was fair of him; but maybe he didn't know it."

"It is absurd to suppose that, Thomas; it is utterly inconceivable, that if such a provision had been made for His Church by Christ, St. Paul, at such a time especially, should have been left in ignorance of its existence. All that St. Paul knew, he taught them, and this was no less than 'THE WHOLE COUNSEL AND DESIGN OF GOD.' (Acts xx. 27.) Now, Thomas, I would ask you again, which will you mind, St. Paul or the priest? St. Paul, who tells you and me and every one 'to take heed to ourselves,' and 'to watch;' or the priest, who relieves us from all trouble and anxiety, and says that we need not take heed, for that he will watch. The Bible which praises the people who lived in Berea for SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES DAILY, to try

if the things spoken by *himself* (Paul) *and the other Apostles*, were true ; or the priest, who tells you not to read the Bible, because there are parts which you may find a difficulty in understanding ; and requires you to believe him without offering any proof, as St. Paul did, that he speaks the truth. On some other occasion we will talk again on this subject ; but in the meanwhile, if you like it, I will lend you this little pamphlet called ‘The Search after Infallibility,’ written by a clever man—the late Archbishop Whately—but do not take even his word without, like the Bereans, looking in the Testament which I gave you, if what he says is true.”

“Thank you, sir ; I’ll remember it. When may I come again ?”

“The evening after to-morrow, at seven.”



CHAPTER X.

Tommy went up to Mr. Stewart on the evening he had appointed; and after the usual lessons were said, he introduced the subject of religion again, and spoke long and earnestly on the subject. A great many passages, both from the Douay and Protestant Bibles, were quoted by Mr. Stewart, and attentively listened to by his pupil. Indeed, the latter did not appear much disposed to argue this evening; he asked questions only, and listened to the answers. About half-past nine Mr. Stewart said, "Now, Thomas, we have spoken a great deal about religion, and God's Book; what would you think if we asked His blessing on our search after truth?" The boy consented; and both knelt and prayed. There were tears in Tommy's eyes as he stood up and wished Mr. Stewart "Good-night."

Tommy's conversion proceeded rapidly. He came very often to the glebe, and each time heard Mr. Stewart's explanation of different parts of Scripture with renewed interest. He gave up going to chapel, and spent his evenings in reading the Bible. He also attended the family dinner of the Ellises, remaining in the kitchen of his own accord, instead of going out, as he had previously done. One evening, at the conclusion of a conversation that the

clergyman and his pupil had on prayers in an unknown tongue, Tommy said, half to himself, "I never was at church yet of a Sunday."

"Suppose, then, you begin next Sunday," said Mr. Stewart, smiling.

"I'm afraid, sir, that I'm not good enough to go to God's house yet; I was thinkin' of askin' you, but wasn't sure if I ought." His teacher was affected at the boy's piety.

"My dear Thomas," he answered, laying his hand on the lad's shoulder, "it is with such a feeling you should always approach God in prayer: fearing, *knowing* that you of yourself are not good enough to address Him, except through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ, by whose intercession only can anything we do be acceptable to God."

Tommy went to church accordingly, and set a good example to other boys by his devout behaviour while there.

During the following week, being asked by Mr. Stewart how he liked the church service, he answered, in a low voice, "that he liked it very much; that he never felt so happy as while there; and that he intended to go to church for the future."

"Then I may consider you a Protestant?" inquired Mr. Stewart.

"Yes, sir," said Tommy, in the same tone.

Mr. Stewart shook his hand, and both knelt to pray that God might bless his resolution.

Tommy had to endure a great deal of persecution from his Roman Catholic neighbours and the priest, on account of his change. His name was called from the altar, and Ellis received a notice, threatening him, unless he turned Tommy off. The latter was very strong in his new-formed

resolution, but Ellis wavered, and mentioned his fears to Mr. Stewart.

"Who is that intelligent-looking boy in the second class?" asked Lady S—— of Mr. Stewart, one morning after Sunday-school, which she frequently visited on her way to church; "he is a stranger, I think?"

"Yes," replied the clergyman, "and a convert. He is the boy I told you of, whom I found on the road one cold night, without lodging."

"And he was a Romanist, then?"

"Yes;" and Mr. Stewart related the whole history of his conversion as they walked toward the church.

"He is very clever, you say?"

"Remarkably so. I never taught any pupil with so much pleasure."

"He must leave this certainly, Mr. Stewart. I will think of it, and let you know if I can do anything; I have become very much interested in him;" and they entered the church.

On the following Thursday the clergyman received the accompanying note from Lady S——:

"DEAR SIR,

"I have just had a letter from my uncle, in answer to one I wrote about your *protegé*. He thinks that the boy might be admitted into one of the Diocesan Schools on the foundation; but he would not recommend this plan unless his abilities were good, and gave promise of his being eventually able to enter college as a sizar. On hearing from you, I shall again write to my uncle,

And am, dear Sir,

Very truly yours,

"C—— S——."

Mr. Stéwart gave a most flattering description of his pupil's mental powers, not exaggerating them in the least degree; and in about ten days after, received a second

note from Lady S——, informing him that Tommy was to proceed to Dublin with the enclosed letter to her uncle, and thence to E—— school. With her wonted liberality, she also sent £5 to purchase clothes for him, and pay his expenses. And Tommy having gone to C—— house to thank her ladyship, took leave of his friends, the Ellises, and with a warm shake-hands, and many kind wishes from Mr. Stewart, was launched a second time into the strange world.



There is a sweet little town in one of the midland counties. Two rows of neat white-washed houses in a little valley, with undulating hills, and here and there a thick plantation round it. Close to the town, on a small rising ground, stood the church, with its pretty yew-planted church-yard, just where one would like to sleep when dead. It was May, too, and the little birds were singing to their mates, and building houses for their young. The trees were getting green again, and the various crops began to change the dark clay of the fields.

It was about six o'clock on a Saturday evening, as a chariot and pair of posters drove up to the little inn. A respectable servant-man, in plain clothes, got down from the seat behind, and opened the door; a nice-looking old lady got out; tall and straight, though old; she had been handsome; and even yet, the dark commanding eye shone brightly, and was handsome still.

"Order dinner, Harpur," she said, "and a private room; and Harriet," she continued, addressing a female servant, who had also got down from behind, "bring in my writing-desk; and, Harpur, have fresh horses to the carriage in an hour."

"I find, ma'am," said the servant, entering the sitting-

room of the hotel, as the old lady commenced dinner, "that the hind axle-tree of the carriage is broken, and I don't think we can get it mended to-night."

"Is it quite impossible to go on with it, Harpur?"

"Quite, ma'am, I wonder that it brought us in ; that bad piece of road outside the town must have done it."

"We shall only have to stay here till Monday, Harpur, in that case ; get my things in, and send the mistress of the hotel to me."

The old lady went to church on the following day, and was shown up to the gallery. An elderly gentleman read the service until the sermon ; and a young man then entered the pulpit to preach. The old lady hurriedly rose from her knees after the prayers, before the sermon, and gazed earnestly at him ; she had not seen him during the service, as he sat rather under the gallery. He announced his text, and began to preach ; more intently the lady looked at him—murmuring at intervals to herself. He spoke on, looking up directly to the gallery. She became more excited ; stood up and sat down again ; the people in the pew thought her mad. She appeared at last unable to restrain herself, and left the church.

She rang the bell of her room at the inn, when she returned.

"Who is that young clergyman?" she inquired, in an agitated voice, of the girl who answered her summons.

"What clergyman, ma'am?"

"The young clergyman in church, who preached to-day."

"Oh! you mean our new curate, ma'am, I suppose ; Mr. Walker, I think, is his name, he is only just ordained, ma'am ; this is his third Sunday."

"Who is he?—where does he come from?"

"Oh! not a one of me knows that, ma'am."

"That will do; send my servant to me when he returns from church."

"Harpur," she said, as the man entered, "did you see him?"

The servant gazed with astonishment at her excited face. "See whom, ma'am?"

"Mr. Thomas; didn't you see him?"

"Oh! ma'am," replied Harpur, soothingly, "sure you know he's dead."

"Oh! I know that, Harpur, I know that; but did you see that clergyman that preached; was he not very like him?"

"Why, I can't say, ma'am; I didn't take particular notice; I'm sure if he was like him, I would have taken notice; didn't I know poor Mr. Thomas as well as I do you, ma'am?"

"Ah! Harpur, you were not his mother: and then his voice, the expression of his mouth and eye—oh! I'm sure."

"But, suppose he is like, ma'am, what of that? sure there might be twenty people like Mr. Thomas, and no relation of his."

"Harpur, we never heard what became of that unfortunate girl; he may be her son. Come"—she added, after a pause—"go with my compliments to him; Mr. Walker, I think he is called, and say, that the lady who was taken ill in church to-day, would be glad to speak with him. I will find out who he is in conversation."



CHAPTER XI.

EN the servant retired, the old lady took out of her writing-desk a miniature, and gazed at it ; it was that of a handsome lad about eighteen. ed her head on her hand, and laid it on the table er, while the silent tears rolled down her cheek, nind within wandered back to happy days gone by. ervant re-entered. "The gentleman is below a'am."

w him up, Harpur," she answered ; and turning ure on its face, composed herself to receive her

Rev. Mr. Waters was announced. The old lady d with dignified composure, as she motioned him

will excuse me troubling you, sir," she com-
"particularly on a Sunday, when you clergymen
much to do. I am here quite accidentally, my
having broken down late last night, as I passed
the town. I was taken ill in church to-day, and
that I disturbed the congregation during your

; I heard that a lady had been obliged to leave
I trust you are better now."

"Thank you; yes, I am better, but much depressed in spirits; and being alone, felt anxious to speak to some one. A clergyman is the best companion I could have on such a day: though I must apologise again for having sent for you so unceremoniously."

"By no means: indeed having heard that the lady who had been unwell in church was a stranger, and staying at the hotel, I was about to come and ask how she was."

"Oh! thank you, I am much obliged; I wished to see you rather than the other clergyman, as what I heard of your sermon pleased me much; and—and you are very like an old friend of mine. May I ask," she continued, with a slight tremor in her voice, "to what family of Walkers do you belong?"

"Waters is my name, madam—not Walker," he answered, colouring deeply.

"Ah! Waters!—a southern name, I think?"

"Midland county," muttered the gentleman, still more confused.

The old lady had turned the picture again, and looked alternately from one to the other.

"You will excuse my pertinacity," she continued, in a low agitated voice, "when I show you this picture so very like you. The resemblance is so remarkable, that I cannot help entreating you to tell me of your family, and who your parents were."

She handed him the miniature as she spoke. It might have been a likeness of himself; for though he was about three-and-twenty, yet, from his light complexion, he still looked very boyish. He held the picture in his hand, until the tears crowding to his eyes, dimmed his sight. He stood up, and tried to speak; but a choking in his throat precluded utterance. He laid the picture down,

resumed his chair, and covering his face with his hands, burst into tears.

"Oh! merciful God," he sobbed at length, "is it possible my prayer has been heard at last. Madam," he went on, "I never saw my parents—know nothing of my father, and my poor mother drowned herself in the canal at M——."

"Her name—what was her name?" asked the lady, eagerly.

"No one knew; there was nothing found on her, when she was taken out of the water, to give any clue, except" —

"Except what—except what?"

"A mere trifle after all: a torn corner of a letter was in her pocket, with 'Dear Thomas,' written on it. By this name I was baptized, and called Waters, from the circumstance of her death."

The old lady had leaned back in her chair. "I am weak," she said, feebly; "but I thank God. Yes, my heart tells me you are my boy's child. Come here, grandson;" and making an effort, she stood up, and sank fainting in his arms.

On the following morning, as soon as the carriage could be repaired, they started for M——. And on the way, our hero learned the following sad history. Mrs. Cole—for this was the old lady's name—was the wife of a gentleman of large property in the County K——. He had died soon after the birth of an only son, leaving his wife in unrestricted possession of all that he had. Her entire care and thought was spent on the child; and as he grew up, over-fondness and lavish indulgence spoiled him. Mrs. Cole, although much attached to him, could ill brook disobedience; and the severe punishments she inflicted were not proportioned to her excessive tenderness; and so

the boy grew up, alternately threatened and caressed, consequently his disposition, naturally high-spirited and impetuous, became wayward and obstinate. When he was about nineteen, he fell in love with a pretty country girl, the daughter of one of his mother's tenants. It went on for some time without his mother's knowledge; and when she did learn it, she used threats instead of persuasion. She went so far as to say, that if he did not break off all acquaintance with Susan Jackson, and go abroad, she would disinherit him. He replied by leaving the house and the country in a few days after, accompanied by the girl. His mother, disconsolate when she found him really gone, heard nothing of him for three years, when she received a letter from an officer in India, stating that he wrote at the request of Thomas Henderson, whose real name was Cole, a volunteer in the Indian army, who had been killed in a battle that had lately taken place—that he entreated his mother's forgiveness, and implored her to take care of his poor wife, Susan Jackson, if she was still alive. The mother grieved from that time for her headstrong son, whose image had been so powerfully recalled by the young clergyman.

It was late in the evening when they arrived at the hotel in M——; and on inquiry learned that Mrs. Connor still lived; that she was a widow, and on her husband's death had left the lock-house; but the chamber-maid, who was their informant, could not say exactly where she was then; but she thought she must be somewhere in the town.

"We shall have a search made to-morrow," said Mrs. Cole, as the girl left the room.

Early the next morning, long before breakfast, our friend Tommy, for so we shall still call him, went out to look for his old nurse. He met many familiar faces going

to their morning work ; but not one look of recognition ; none remembered the poor little orphan in the tall clergyman. At last he saw a very well-known face—an old man creeping out to welcome God's sun on the summer morning—old Wilson ; he had been old when Tommy was a boy, and had won his heart by various gifts of apples and gooseberries out of his little garden. He had smiled when all the world frowned. Tommy stopped him—“Can you tell me,” he asked, “where Mrs. Connor lives now ?”

“What Mrs. Connor, sir ?”

“She used to live at the canal-lock.”

“Oh ! ay ! poor woman, she’s badly off now ; ye’ll find her in the last of the row of houses as you turn to your right, on the left hand side of the way down.”

“And how are you yourself, Mr. Wilson ?”

“Well, thank you, sir, I thank God ; but how do you know my name ?” he continued, shading his eyes with his hand. “I don’t think I ever saw you before. No,” he added, after a pause, “I never did to my knowledge.”

“You did,” said the young clergyman, smiling, and taking his hand ; “don’t you remember little Tommy Waters ?”

“Sure, sir, you’re not Temmy Waters ; I always thought you were lost, sir. Well now, I do recollect your voice and eyes ; ‘deed, sir, I’m very glad to see you.” And he shook his hand heartily. “Come in, sir, and speak to the old woman, she’ll be delighted.”

“No, thank you, Wilson ; I must go to Mrs. Connor first ; but do you and your wife come and see me at the hotel, at ten o’clock.”

Adversity appeared to have made Mrs. Connor’s temper worse ; he heard her voice in anger as he approached the door, and a gentle one answered—

“Indeed, mother, I cannot do more ; I am never idle ; and if people won’t pay me better, I cannot help it.”

Tommy stood on the threshold. Mrs. Connor was smoking at the fire, a pale young girl was cleaning the house, and a deformed young man was reading in the corner.

"Oh! you're early in the field," said Mrs. Connor, addressing her visitor, without looking up; "you're come for the rint, I suppose; but there is none for you—so take yourself off; it's to the poorhouse you want us to go."

"Ah! whisht, mother, it's a gentleman."

"You don't know me, Mrs. Connor," he said, entering, "nor you, Mary Anne; but Willy does, I'm sure."

The invalid had looked up from his book; he threw it from him, and held out both his hands; he was sitting in a sort of cot.

"It's Tommy Waters come back again: I can't stand up, Tommy, acushla machree; but you're right welcome back, with all my heart," and tears of joy rolled from his eyes; and Tommy caught both the extended hands, and stooped down to kiss the wasted lips of his old playfellow. Neither could speak for some moments; at last Tommy said in a choked voice, as he shook hands with Mary Anne and her mother—

"Will you come up to the hotel in an hour, Mrs. Connor, if you please; there is a lady there who wishes to ask you some questions about my poor mother; and bring with you whatever you may have which was found on either of us: I will come back in the course of the day; good-bye, Willy, I shall see you soon again;" and slipping a sovereign into Mary Anne's hand, he left them.

Mrs. Connor had nothing to show Mrs. Cole but the piece of paper mentioned above, a portion of the dress and cloak which the drowned woman wore, and a lock of her hair. "She was always sure," she said, "that Tommy would turn out to be somebody's son after all." Mrs. Connor also described the appearance of the young woman

very exactly ; "but she had no wedding ring on, ma'am," she added confidentially.

Mrs. Cole looked annoyed. "What do you think of all this, Harpur?" she inquired of her servant, who was present at the examination.

"Well, ma'am, the description answers Susan Jackson exactly ; and I have an idea that old Cox made a picture of her long ago ; and if her family have that, this woman could say if it is the same ; and then about the wedding ring, ma'am ; we ought to make inquiries all about this country, and advertise in all the papers, giving a description of the parties, and offer a reward for any information."

"Yes, Harpur, that will do excellently well. You will remain here, and make all inquiries ; spare no expense—advertise in every Irish paper. Mr. Thomas and I will take this woman to Motley, and try if we can find the picture. Order the carriage."

Tommy took leave of his friends and Willy, promising to come back again, and shook hands with a crowd of old acquaintances, that were round the hotel door, as the carriage drove off.

The picture was found with an uncle of Susan Jackson's ; and Mrs. Connor declared it was the image : and in about ten days Harpur came with the certificate of the marriage of Thomas Cole and Susan Jackson, in a little remote church in the south of Ireland ; and evidence of their journey towards M—— ; how they had separated ; she to go to her friends, and he to look for employment ; how she had been robbed during her confinement, and arrived broken-hearted at M——.

There was no longer any doubt that our Foundling was honestly and well-born, and had worked his own way to independence : Willy was taken to live with him ;

Mrs. Connor and Mary Anne got a house in the demesne; and Mrs. Cole and her grandson went to call on Mr. Stewart, and return thanks to the kind Lady S—.

As Tommy shook his early benefactor by the hand, and reminded him of the stormy night when he had found him by the road-side, he said, “I met many friends, dear sir, in my early life; not one act of kindness from the poorest is forgotten; but the warmest thanks of my heart I owe to you, who first taught me the precious truths of the Word of God, and enabled me to seek the riches which are beyond price.”



ELLEN SEATON;
OR,
THE BIBLE ALONE.

CHAPTER I.

"**M**ISS SEATON is to go into the library," said the senior assistant in a large school near L—, as the young ladies rose from breakfast.

Ellen Seaton, a mild blue-eyed little girl of twelve years old, obeyed, and soon found herself in the presence of Mrs. Villiers, the amiable principal of the establishment.

A letter lay open on the lady's desk.

"Ellen," she commenced, as soon as the latter had seated herself, "I have sent for you in consequence of a communication just received from your father. He gives me some directions about you, which I think you had better know."

"Oh! I am to go home before the holidays, to see my cousins," cried the little girl joyfully.

"No, Ellen, dear, you are not to go home during the holidays at all."

"Not go home?" said Ellen, and her countenance fell; "but dear Mrs. Villiers," she added, after a pause, "I think I shall be very happy with you."

"You are not to stay with me, Ellen," answered the lady, in a voice slightly agitated.

"To whom am I to go, then?" exclaimed the child, anxiously.

Mrs. Villiers replied, "Ellen, darling, you are old enough now to know the meaning of the passage in Holy Scripture, 'Whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth'; and you surely recollect that the same authority says, 'All things work together for good to them that love God.' And I feel convinced that you believe that 'all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.'"

"Papa is dead," said the little girl, sobbing, while the large tears rolled down her cheeks.

"No, Ellen, dear, worse than that for you; he has given up the religion of the Bible—the Holy Scriptures—"able to make us wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus." He has left the Saviour as the only means of salvation. He has become a Roman Catholic."

The little girl appeared stupefied; at length she said, "A Roman Catholic! are you sure, dear Mrs. Villiers?"

"Alas! my love, too sure; here is the first announcement in his own handwriting. Listen—

"DEAR MRS. VILLIERS,

"It has pleased the Almighty in His mercy to lead me from darkness and the valley of the shadow of death, and to guide my footsteps in the way of peace. I have embraced the one true faith, with which only our blessed Lord has promised to be 'till the consummation of time,' and am now on my way to Rome, previous to becoming a priest in the Catholic Church. You will, in consequence, understand my anxiety to have my dear Ellen in some place where she will have an opportunity of learning those

blessed truths which her father has so happily embraced; my friend, Father Forrest, will therefore call upon you in a day or two after you receive this, to take charge of her, and settle any demands you may have against me.

"Communicate my wishes to the dear child, also that I regret not being able to have her home for the summer holidays, and with many thanks for your care and attention to her,

"I remain, dear Mrs. Villiers,

"Very faithfully yours,

"EDWARD SEATON.

"P.S.—I think it well that Ellen should further know that her mamma has likewise renounced the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and is endeavouring to make amends for past thoughtlessness in the seclusion of a cloister."

"But why cannot I go to mamma?" asked Ellen, eagerly.

"She is also a Roman Catholic; she has become a nun."

"But, Mrs. Villiers, dear Mrs. Villiers," exclaimed Ellen, passionately, the full force of her desolate situation appearing to break on her, "you will not let me go, won't you keep me here? don't let me be taken away. Oh! Mrs. Villiers, ma'am, say you won't." And the little girl put her arm round the lady's neck, and sobbed on her bosom.

"Ellen," replied the good lady, wiping her eyes, "your father wishes you to leave me to learn to be a Roman Catholic."

"But I won't be a Roman Catholic," she cried, interrupting. "I never will give up the Bible. I never will forget that the blood of my dear Saviour cleanses me from *all* sin. You know our hymn, ma'am?" And she repeated, with flushed cheek and brightening eye—

"There is a fountain fill'd with blood,
Drawn from Emmanuel's veins,
And sinners plunged beneath that flood,
Lose all their guilty stains."

"But what shall I do? Mamma, who first taught me it, is a Roman Catholic." And she again threw herself on her teacher's neck, and sobbed violently.

"Ellen, darling, sit down quietly and listen to me," said Mrs. Villiers, after a pause. "Your papa and mamma have both turned from the Lord's path; their eyes have been blinded that they should not see; they have heeded the voice of men rather than the Word of God; and it seems to me, therefore, that as you have a Heavenly Father to whom you must give account at the last day; that as His authority is far higher than your earthly parents, you will be justified in obeying Him rather than them; in following His commands rather than their example; in looking to the Bible and Jesus Christ, repentance and faith, rather than tradition, the Church, penance, absolution, the Virgin Mary, saints, and such like. Your immortal soul is at stake. You ought to obey God rather than man."

"Oh! yes, indeed, I will; and I can stay with you now."

"No, Ellen, I do not see how I can dispute your father's written directions respecting you; but always remember, Ellen, that wherever you are, if you pray for it, the 'Holy Spirit will be given to guide you into all truth.' Always remember to 'Prove all things, holding fast that which is good;' 'being steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as you know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.'

A servant entered with a card; "The Rev. R. Forrest" was on it.

"Ellen," said Mrs. Villiers, hastily, "run and get your bonnet, and go out to the garden till I call you in. Show the gentleman up stairs," she added, to the servant, as the little girl left the room.

A large thick-set, dark-haired man entered, not havin-

the usual mark of a Romish priest—the little band round his neck.—He wore a neat black cravat and collar.

“Mrs. Villiers, I presume,” he said, politely bowing, as he entered.

The lady half rose from her chair, slightly inclined her head, pointed to another, and replied, “Yes, sir.”

“You have received a letter from Mr. Seaton relative to his little daughter?” he inquired.

“This moment,” she replied.

“Yes, by the post, this morning. I am to hand you this.” And he placed another note before her.

She opened it, and read:—

“DEAR MRS. VILLIERS,

“The bearer, Father Forrest, is the gentleman of whom I wrote. On the receipt of this, you will give my daughter Ellen into his charge, when he will settle the account.

“Faithfully yours,

“EDWARD SEATON.”

The lady took some time to read this short note. She was praying to the Lord for counsel. At last she said, “Very well, sir; Miss Seaton will be ready for you the day after to-morrow.”

“The day after to-morrow!” he repeated. “Why, madam, I shall leave this to-day—in two hours. I think Mr. Seaton’s note is explicit; his daughter, Ellen, is to be given into my charge on the receipt of it. I must request, therefore, that you will comply with his direction.”

“Miss Seaton’s clothes have to be got ready, and packed, and her account has to be made out; all of which could not possibly be done to-day.”

“Nevertheless, madam, it must be attempted. I have no objection to wait for some time; two or three hours

ought to be quite enough for preparation, and anything that is forgotten can be sent to my address with the account."

"The poor little girl has been greatly upset by her papa's letter," urged Mrs. Villiers. "She is not to have any vacation. She is besides a very nervous and sensitive child, and cried bitterly at the idea of going amongst strangers. You must give her a little time."

"Not at all; the sooner the shock is over, in that case, the better; but she will not be without holidays. Would you be so good as to send for her?"

"Miss Seaton cannot leave this to-day," said the lady, rising with dignity from her chair.

"What! madam, have you not read her father's note?"

"I have, sir. Mr. Seaton, in his note, which came by the post, speaks of your coming in a day or two; and I would not feel justified in allowing his daughter to leave my care, until I represented to him her extreme unwillingness to do so, of which you may yourself judge." She rang the bell, saying to the servant who obeyed the summons—

"Go to the garden, and tell Miss Seaton I want her."

"And when, pray, can the young lady come with me?" asked the priest, sneeringly.

"When I receive an answer from her father."

"He is on his way to Rome."

"Her mother, then."

"Her address is not known."

"Her nearest relation in England, since they have resigned the charge."

The priest's face was purple with rage.

"Madam," he said in a choked voice, "beware what you do." And Ellen entered.

She started as she saw the strange, disturbed face.

"Ellen," began Mrs. Villiers, "this is the person whom your father mentioned would call for you."

"Oh! I won't go," she screamed, clinging to the lady's dress; "dear Mrs. Villiers, don't let me go, don't let me go;" and she sobbed hysterically. There was a pause, broken only by the child's crying.

"Perhaps Miss Seaton would listen to a message her poor papa gave for her own self, along with this little book," said the priest gently.

Ellen looked up; he held a little book in his hand.

"A word for your own ear," he continued winningly. "A little word your papa, who is now far away, bid me tell yourself."

Ellen drew near to him. He beckoned to the window; they approached it. He stooped down, saying something in a low voice. They were near the door, when he suddenly caught her in his arms, opened the door, and rushed out. Mrs. Villiers was petrified; she could not scream, but one from Ellen rang loud and shrill on the staircase; then she ran after and called. But Ellen's scream had been heard below also; the school-room door was thrown open, and Father Forrest, as he hurried down to the hall, was met by Miss Campion, the tall governess, and a troop of astonished young ladies.

"Save me, save me," screamed Ellen.

"Set down that child, sir," cried Miss Campion, sternly.

"Woman, let me pass," said the priest, endeavouring to burst on.

Miss Campion caught Ellen, the girls crowded round her; she was torn from his arms, and hid amongst the little band.

"John, show this person out," said Mrs. Villiers in a firm tone, as the gardener appeared from the kitchen.

The reverend father glanced round, and hurriedly made his exit.

What was to be done next? Ellen could not stay there with safety. Mrs. Villiers had a sister living about forty miles off, and there she determined to send the little girl, under the charge of John the gardener, that very evening, and not give her up until she received an answer to the remonstrance she felt she was bound to write Mr. Seaton. Ellen also wrote, directing her letter to "La posta restante, Roma."



CHAPTER II.

EN days passed over. Mrs. Parker, the lady with whom Ellen was staying, had driven into the neighbouring town on business. Ellen was playing with the little children left behind half in her charge.

"Miss Ellen, a lady at the hall-door wishes to speak to you," said the maid, looking into the parlour.

And Ellen ran into the hall. It was her own mamma. And she sprung into her arms.

"I am sorry that you left Mrs. Villiers, Ellen," said Mrs. Seaton, "and I am come to bring you back there. Make haste now, and put on your things, and pack up a little bundle of what you want most. I have a carriage waiting on the road."

"May I not bring my trunk, mamma?"

"No, love, the carrier will fetch it."

And Ellen joyfully got her bonnet, put a few things in a handkerchief, kissed her little playmates, and joined her mamma.

The latter took her hand, and they went away. On the road stood a carriage, into which they entered. Oh! horrible, there was Father Forrest sitting in it, reading quietly. Ellen gazed at him in terror, and they drove off.

"Well, my dear," he said, shutting his book, "you must

not be frightened at me—you see I am your mamma's friend."

Ellen shuddered, but did not answer.

Mrs. Seaton spoke but little to her; she and the priest conversed in French, and towards evening they came to a large town.

"Shall we not be at Mrs. Villiers' to-night, mamma?" she asked.

"Not till to-morrow," replied her companion, "we are going another road."

They stopped at an hotel that evening, and started again the next day.

About noon, Ellen said, "Are you sure we are going to Mrs. Villiers', mamma?"

The priest made a sign to the lady, and she answered, "You are not going to Mrs. Villiers', Ellen. You are going to the school where I wish you to be; where you will be taught to fear and reverence the Almighty better than at Mrs. Villiers'."

"You told me, mamma, that we were going back to Mrs. Villiers'," exclaimed Ellen reproachfully, "and no one could teach me better than Mrs. Villiers; for she taught me out of God's own book. She taught me to love God rather than to fear Him; 'He who first loved us, and gave His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.'"

"A fine little Methodist," said the priest, sneeringly.

"I'm not a Methodist, sir," cried Ellen, "I am a member of the scriptural Church of England; but if I were a Methodist, and there are some of them very good people, it would be far better than being a papist."

"Hush! Ellen," said her mother solemnly, "do not speak thus of the one true Church, of which your papa and I are members; and to which, I trust with God's blessing, you will eventually belong also."

"Oh! no, no, dear mamma, I never will be a Roman Catholic; never, never, never. How could I give up the Bible, and Jesus Christ alone? How could I bow down before images, and say prayers in Latin, and believe that a man could forgive sins, or that we could get people's souls from purgatory by paying, when Jesus tells us to go to Him without money and without price?"

"Ellen, love," said her mother, putting her arms round her and kissing her, "promise me to study more on these things, which you now see through a glass darkly, for my sake, but above all for your own. Won't you, darling?"

"Yes, dear mamma, with you; let me stay with you," answered the little girl, returning her embrace.

"Beware!" said the priest, holding up his hand. And Mrs. Seaton resumed her cold manner, as before.

The carriage stopped at a large gate in high walls.

"Is this a prison?" asked Ellen, innocently.

Father Forrest frowned on her.

"There are some pretty gardens here that I am going to show your mamma," he rejoined. "You may stay in the carriage though, if you like."

"Oh! no, pray let me go." And she went with them.

There was a large house inside the high walls, and a beautiful garden behind it. Ellen was greatly pleased with the garden. Such lovely flowers; and an aviary with all kinds of birds, and here and there some statues. Oh! and further on a nice little pond full of golden fish. And Ellen gazed at them in admiration.

"Oh! mamma, are not they pretty?" she cried.

But what!—she was alone; her mamma and the priest had gone. She looked down the next walk; no, not there. She tried another, calling, "Mamma, mamma." A figure at the further end approached her, covered in a long grey cloak and curious hood. Ellen ran up to her.

"Did you see my mamma, ma'am?" she inquired eagerly.

"Your mamma went away about ten minutes ago, and has left you here with me," answered the person she addressed, taking her hand kindly.

Ellen pulled it away, and burst into tears.

"You must not cry, Miss Seaton," said the lady in grey, after a pause.

"Where is my mamma?" sobbed the little girl.

"She has gone away on important business, and left you here at school."

"I shan't stay here. I must go to her." And Ellen was running away. The lady caught her arm.

"Ellen Seaton!" she cried sternly, "your mamma has left you here in my charge for your education. If you are violent, and oppose me, I shall lock you up and punish you; if, on the contrary, you are good and obedient, you will be very happy and comfortable. Are not these nice gardens, which you can play in every day with your companions? and then you can write to your mamma, you know; and I daresay she may come to see you occasionally. But shall we go and look at your room?" And holding her still without waiting for an answer, she led her away.

Ellen submitted, for she felt that there was no use in resisting, and she accompanied the lady quietly towards the house. She was shown to a nice little room, one of many on a long corridor, where she perceived her bundle.

"This is your chamber," remarked her conductress, "and I hope you will keep it tidy. Dinner is over here, but we shall have tea at six, when you will be called down; in the meantime, a dress will be brought to you, such as the pupils wear here, and this you will put on previous to supper. You have a few books, which you can look over till then." And Ellen was left alone.

There was a picture of a woman, with a little child in her arms, over the chimney-piece ; a little book-shelf had about a dozen volumes ; on the dressing-table was a good-sized book, with gilt edges, and a large cross on the cover. Ellen thought it looked like the Bible. No ; it had curious prayers only in it, Latin on one side and English on the other. She turned towards her bed, and, oh ! what was this ? A crucifix was on the wall at the head of it, and a little kneeling-place underneath. Ellen ran over and tried to take it from the wall. Ah ! it was nailed there, and attached to the lower part was a half-circular cup, wooden like the crucifix, filled with water. Ellen turned to her bundle, and went to get her Bible from it. She untied it eagerly ; it was not there !—neither it nor her prayer-book, which she distinctly recollects having put up with her other things ; she never forgot them. Her bundle had been opened, and they were taken away. Ellen was now indeed left desolate, and she sat down and wept bitterly.

She was aroused by an elderly female entering with a dress, which she told Ellen was for her, and also that she had better put it on directly, as tea would be ready in half-an-hour. She laid it down on a chair and went away. Ellen stood up and examined it. It was of coarse grey material, very clumsily made, with, to Ellen's horror, a large white cross marked on the breast. She threw it back on the chair, and sat down to cry again.

There was a gentle knock at the door. "Come in," answered Ellen through her tears ; and a graceful young lady entered, about twenty, with soft blue eyes and brown hair, dressed in grey also.

"You will come to your supper, Miss Seaton," she said, in a sweet, gentle voice. "But why are you crying ?" She went on more kindly, approaching her—" You must not mind being lonesome at first."

"It is not that," sobbed Ellen; "somebody has stolen my Bible, and they want me to wear that horrid frock."

"Stolen your Bible! It could not have been here."

"It must have been; for I put it up myself, and had it with me until I got out of the carriage last, and when I looked just now it was gone; and I am to have that nasty thing there at the bedside instead. But I know how it is: they want to make me a Roman Catholic, like papa and mamma; but I won't be one—never! I'll never give up the Bible and Jesus Christ." And Ellen sobbed on.

"How you talk! Catholics do not give up Jesus. We are Catholics here, and see how we think of Him. There, at His birth with His mother—there, at His death on the cross—and here, the emblem of His suffering, the cross itself."

"It's all idolatry," cried Ellen, vehemently; we don't require all these to recollect the love of Jesus for us. We should have very bad memories, and very bad hearts if we did; besides, we are forbidden by the Second Commandment 'to bow down or worship *any* graven image of *any* thing that is in *Heaven above*.'

"You mistake, dear, that is not the Second Commandment; it is"—and the other lady entered the room.

"Why does not Ellen Seaton come down?" she demanded angrily.

"Somebody has stolen my Bible," answered Ellen boldly.

"Stolen, Miss Seaton, is a disagreeable word to use, and I request that I may not hear it again."

"It's the truth," said Ellen.

"Silence! Miss, if you please. Sister Agatha, why is not her frock on?"

"She had it not on when I came up, ma'am," replied the younger female, mildly.

"I won't wear that ugly frock with the cross on it," cried Ellen ; "my own is a great deal better."

"If you don't put it on at once," said the elder lady, "you shall not have any supper."

"I am not hungry, and can do without any."

"Come, Sister Agatha, leave this disobedient child here until she regains her senses." And both ladies went out, and Ellen heard the key turned in the door outside. She lunged herself on the bed, and cried again.

At last she stopped. It was getting dark ; and, as she rose, the first thing her eye rested on was the crucifix.

"I won't sleep with that there," she said, and tried to pull it down ; but it was too firmly fastened there. She had a little pen-knife, and she tried with it to loosen the nails. Excellent ! After some labour she got one out ; and, as she worked at the other, the key turned in the door, and Sister Agatha entered. She had a bit of bread n her hand, and a little milk in a cup.

"I have brought you this, Miss Seaton ; you must be hungry after your journey to-day. Come, try a little." And closing the door, she put it on the table and placed a chair. Ellen liked her kind manner, and, being hungry besides, gladly approached.

After she had eaten, Sister Agatha asked her, "What noise were you making when I came to the door ?" Ellen blushed, but did not answer. "Won't you tell me," continued Sister Agatha, putting her arm round Ellen's neck. She could not resist this.

"I will not sleep with that thing there," she said, having great tendency to cry again, and pointing to the crucifix. Sister Agatha touched it, and perceived it a little loose.

"Oh ! Ellen dear, you must not do this ; you will only get yourself into trouble, and do no good. And why object to the crucifix ? It is only the picture of your

Saviour dying ; and do you dislike, or are you ashamed of that ? ”

“ It ’s idolatry,” urged Ellen.

“ No ; not in your eyes even, unless you pray to it, which you need not do. Now, give me the nail, that I may put it in again.” And she settled it.

“ But tell me, Ellen,” she resumed, “ what did you mean by saying what you told me to-day was the Second Commandment ? I never heard of it before.”

“ It is the Second Commandment, though,” replied the little girl, “ written in the twentieth chapter of Exodus ; and if I had my Bible here I would show it to you.”

“ What sort of a book is the Bible ? ” inquired Sister Agatha.

“ And did you never see the Bible ? ” cried Ellen, in astonishment.

“ No ; but I should like, though, very much. I often thought of it. It is a forbidden book here, and the Reverend Mother left yours in the carriage when she opened your bundle.”

“ Oh ! then, mamma will take care of it for me,” said Ellen, joyfully.

“ No, she will not be allowed ; she is a nun, you know, like us here.”

“ Not be allowed ! and may not a lady like my mamma do as she likes ? ”

“ No, she cannot. But wait for a little here ; I shall come back again. Do you go to bed now, and I will come in and talk to you.” Ellen said her prayers and undressed. She lay awake expecting Sister Agatha ; and, just as she was dropping asleep—

“ Are you asleep, dear ? ” was said over her.

“ Oh, no ; I’m not. Lie down beside me, and we can talk, dear Sister Agatha. May I call you that ? ”

"Yes, love; call me Agatha simply, when we are by ourselves." And the nun kissed her affectionately.

"Now, Ellen dear, tell me, did you read much of the Bible?"

"Yes, a great deal."

"Does it say anything about nuns in it?"

"Not a word in the whole of the New Testament."

"Are you quite sure? Did you read it all through?"

"Yes, all but Revelation—we turned back there."

"But maybe it's in that?"

"No, I'm sure it's not; for Mrs. Villiers often said it was all prophecies of things that would happen: you know revelation means that."

"Well, and tell me, is there anything about confession in the Bible?"

"No; but wait—I remember one text—'Confess your faults one to another.'"

"Ah, yes!"

"But that is not, 'Confess your faults to a priest.'"

"Are you sure, Ellen, love?"

"Quite sure. Is it not 'one to another?'—that means, confess our fault to any one we may have injured, and be sorry for it; we are to acknowledge we are sinners, feeling that *all* have come short of the glory of God, and that *all* must look to Jesus Christ for pardon and salvation."

"And you think it means that?"

"Don't you see it yourself?" And there was a pause.

"Ellen dear," resumed Sister Agatha, "will you be very secret if I tell you something—you will not tell, Ellen?"

"Oh! never, never! dear Agatha."

"Ellen, I am here four years now, and you are the first that my heart told me spoke truth since I came here: and so I will tell you something that is bursting

within me. Ellen, darling, I am a vowed nun—I have taken the veil; but I cannot stay. You are too young for me to tell you all the reasons. When you are a grown woman you will know. I am a Catholic still, remember; but I will not stay in this horrible place. Yet, Ellen, if this was dreamed of here, I should be put into a dreadful prison under ground, Ellen, and starved to death. Darling, will you help me to escape?"

"I will! I will, indeed!" replied the little girl, kissing her; "but won't you take me with you?"

"Yes, if I go, so shall you; but you must, like me, pretend—wear the dress—do all you are told—listen to all the arguments—read all the books—by degrees give up—and pretend, Ellen, for my sake and for your own, to become a Catholic. You will be less watched then, and we can wait for an opportunity. Will you do all this?"

"I think I will try," sighed Ellen.

"Do, love, and I will come here in the morning and put on your school dress, and lay by those you have brought until we leave. Good-night, now." And having kissed her again, Sister Agatha went away.



CHAPTER III.

SISTER AGATHA came the next morning, as she had promised, and fitted the large, ugly dress on Ellen, and took away her own two frocks, bonnet, pelerine, and hood, putting in their place a grey cape and close bonnet—so that they did not enter the school-room until near seven, after morning devotions. Ellen perceived eleven other girls habited as she was, all, with one exception, a good deal older than she, and demurely looking on their books; an elderly nun, in the same dress as Sister Agatha, was the teacher: and she also remained to assist, taking Ellen under her own instruction, getting her lesson-books, and pointing out what she was to learn. She was placed near the youngest girl, about a year older than herself, who merely looked at her, but said nothing. At breakfast, a new trial of her faith took place. When a bell rang at nine, the girls were told to rise, and they walked, two and two, before their teachers, into an adjoining room, where the stern lady of the preceding evening was at the breakfast-table, with five other nuns. The pupils ranged themselves at the lower end, standing, while the Reverend Mother said grace in Latin, during which each person present crossed herself. Ellen did not; and as soon as they sat down, the stern lady said—

"Miss Seaton, you did not cross yourself at prayers; be so kind as to do it now, as I do. Stand up, if you please."

"I don't know how," replied Ellen, in a determined tone, not standing up.

"I'll show you, dear," whispered Sister Agatha, behind her; "stand up, love;" and taking her hand, she moved it to the forehead, breast, and shoulders. "Will that do, ma'am?" she asked, turning to the Reverend Mother.

"Yes, Sister Agatha, for to-day; but Ellen must conform to our rules of her own accord in future."

After breakfast, the pupils put on their bonnets and hoods, for a walk in the gardens, and were accompanied by Sister Agatha and another of the younger nuns. The little girl about Ellen's age helped her on with her cape, and said that *her* name was Mary St. Clair, and appeared disposed to make acquaintance with her—to which attempt Ellen, being of an affectionate disposition, responded; but, somehow, she was not beside her when they marched out from the hall, two and two. A tall, dark-eyed girl was Ellen's companion, who rather patronised her; and Ellen was pleased with the notice of a person larger than herself, and they became great friends. Ellen talked more and more unreservedly.

"And so you don't like this place?" asked her new acquaintance, whose name she had told her was Amelia Simpson, in reply to an observation of hers.

"Oh! Ellen, come here," cried Sister Agatha, who was standing apart from the other nun at the aviary; "here is a bird just like what you were reading about this morning;" and Ellen bounded over to see.

"Don't talk too much," whispered Sister Agatha, and then pointed out the birds. "Now go back to *Amelia*."

"And why don't you like being here?" continued this latter, when she rejoined her.

"I did not say that I did not like it," replied Ellen, cautiously.

"I thought you did. You spoke of being away from your mamma."

"Oh, yes! that is a terrible thing. And I don't even know where she is."

"But the Reverend Mother does; and you can write to her, you know, and give the letter open to the Reverend Mother."

"What! may I not seal it?" cried Ellen.

"No; the Reverend Mother must see all that we write. But I have an invisible ink, that will appear after it has lain in the desk or pocket for a week or so."

"Oh, thank you! thank you!" exclaimed Ellen, with unfeigned joy; "and I can write to Mrs. Villiers also that way."

"Yes, to be sure." And the girls were called to range themselves for school.

After vespers that day, Amelia slipped a little bottle and some paper into Ellen's hand, saying hastily, "Go up to your room, now, and write with that ink; after supper you will have time to write with the black, and hand them to the Reverend Mother to be approved and sent."

Ellen had only three quarters of an hour till six, and flew to her room. She drew her chair to the table, and commenced on the third page to her mamma:—"She begged to be taken away from that place, and sent to Mrs. Villiers again—that she could never like it—that she would learn anything her mamma wished if she would let her be with her—that it was a nasty, horrible place—that they were all nearly idolaters—that she never could be a Roman Catholic."

To Mrs. Villiers she was more open, adding to what was in the other, "that she had determined not to stay there—that she would run away to her the first opportunity—that a friend——." But here she thought of her promise to Sister Agatha; and she drew her pen three or four times over those last words, putting in its place, "that she hoped Mrs. Villiers would come and see her, and try to get her away."

She then went down to supper, very contented, made the required sign in a sort of way, and after that meal, had time to write in the school-room with black ink. Sister Agatha came over to her as she had just finished. Having learned how she was employed, she said—

"They must be shown to the Reverend Mother, Ellen, dear, and I will take them and get them sent for you."

"Sister Ursula wishes to take all letters to the Reverend Mother herself," said Amelia Simpson, who was sitting near.

"Miss Simpson will be good enough to hold her tongue," replied Sister Agatha, quietly. The young lady addressed rose from her seat and left the room without asking leave. She returned in a few minutes, followed almost immediately by the Lady Abbess.

This latter walked through the scholars, examining what each was doing, addressing a word to some. "And what is Miss Seaton doing to night?" she asked, stopping behind her.

"Writing to my mamma and Mrs. Villiers, ma'am," replied the little girl, trembling and confused."

"Have you finished?"

"Yes; I was just directing an envelope to Mrs. Villiers; but I must ask you, ma'am, if you please, to send the other to my mamma, as I don't know where she is."

"Well, give them to me, and if I approve of what you have written, they shall be sent."

"You know where my mamma is, ma'am?"

The Abbess took the letters, and, as if she did not hear, quitted the room.

Ellen went to bed joyful and happy. She would be free now—Mrs. Villiers would surely take her away; and so she fell asleep, and in happy dreams was far removed. A cloud was in her dreams, and some indefinable thing seemed to arrest the flow of thought. It was about to rain heavily—yes, there were large drops—and she awoke.

Sister Agatha lay beside her, and it was a hot tear from her eye that had fallen on Ellen's cheek.

"Dear Agatha," exclaimed Ellen, putting an arm round her affectionately.

"Oh, Ellen, darling!" replied the nun, kissing her, 'you have got into great trouble, and very nearly committed me. Why did you write those letters?—why did you say anything about going away, after your promise?"

"Was that found out?" gasped Ellen.

"Alas! yes, dear. Why did you use that ink?—above all, why did you not tell me what you intended? I would have put you on your guard. You recollect I cautioned you in the garden about talking too much."

"But how was it found out, Sister Agatha?"

"Only too easily, Ellen; and now I am again about to trust you with a secret, and I do hope that this time you will be prudent. Amelia, who made such a hasty friendship with you, is a spy, employed and encouraged by the Reverend Mother to find out the thoughts and intentions of the other pupils, and report to her. She laid a trap for you, into which you have foolishly fallen. Your letters were read by the Reverend Mother, when the

invisible writing was made clear by a solution sprinkled on the paper. You will now, Ellen, be very strictly watched ; and I am, I fear, suspected, from that unfortunate phrase you commenced about ‘a friend,’ imperfectly blotted out. The Reverend Mother sent for me after she had read them, and asked, ‘what the word scratched out was?’ I at once perceived, and said it was ‘friend,’ suggesting that you might have been going to relate about the friend who supplied the invisible ink. This appeared to satisfy her; but I am confident that suspicions had been excited in her mind against me by Amelia Simpson, with whom I am no favourite, as I cannot bear the mean, deceitful office she fills. It may be sometimes expedient, Ellen dear, to keep our intentions concealed ; but let us never, never falsify, by word or act, ever so slightly ; for we lose a step in our own self-respect by doing so.”

“ And my letters will not go !” sobbed Ellen.

“ No, they will not ; but the worthy mistress of her apt pupil has decided on leaving you to suppose that they really have been sent. You will, in all probability, receive a letter from your mamma, in answer, as it were, to yours, giving you much advice, and commanding you to remain here. And this leads me to the most painful part of our conversation ; for I cannot, Ellen, conscientiously assist you in leaving this, if your parent, whom God tells you to ‘honour,’ bids you stay. For though I am going to leave, yet the necessity is so imperative, that I feel convinced the Almighty will pardon my breaking my vows, if I continue to serve Him equally well when I leave this.”

“ Of course, dear Agatha,” answered Ellen, calling to mind some of Mrs. Villiers’ lessons, “ God Almighty does not require us to shut ourselves up in houses in order to serve Him. There is no mention of nuns or monks in

Scripture. If the good apostles had formed a monastery at Jerusalem, with St. James as their Lord Abbot, we should have been heathens to this day. Don't you think so ? And if Aquila and Priscilla always remained in their house, they never would have heard the man speaking in the temple, or have been able to expound to him the way of the Lord more perfectly. And if Lois and Eunice, the grandmother and mother of Timothy, had become nuns when they were young, they would never have taught him the Holy Scriptures, which St. Paul praises him for knowing from his infancy ; and could they have been better employed in the Lord's cause ? Besides, there were no convents at all then, for them to go into."

" Why, you know a great deal for such a little girl," rejoined the nun, kissing her.

" Thanks to dear Mrs. Villiers, who made it all so plain and nice. I wish we had a Bible here ; how you would like it ! We could read it together, you know. But I want to say something about mamma writing. If a parent told a child to steal, or tell lies, ought she to do so ?"

" No ; certainly not."

" Well, and if a parent told a child not to read the Bible, or do something that God didn't wish, ought she to obey ?"

" The child must submit to the parent's better judgment, Ellen."

" You might say just the same about stealing ; for the command to ' search the Scriptures ' is as plain as ' Thou shalt not steal.' And when I do search the Scriptures, I cannot find the Roman Catholic doctrines there ; and so I must refuse to obey my mamma in staying here and becoming a Roman Catholic, and maybe a nun afterwards, because, we must obey God rather than man."

" That is, if you are sure you are obeying God."

"But I am sure, Agatha ; and if you had read the Bible you would be also sure. Your church cannot prove what she teaches from that book, and so she does not give it to you. If you read it, it must be without her permission. Even my little Bible would not be allowed to remain with me ; they are afraid of it."

"Hush ! don't speak so loud. But, Ellen dear, comply with all the rules and regulations here, cheerfully and implicitly ; do this for your own sake, but especially for mine, having so nearly disclosed my secret by your ill-advised and foolish writing."

"I will, dear Agatha ; I will, indeed. And I just recollect a part of Scripture that I think gives me leave to make all those crosses and bowings : it is in Kings, where Elisha, the man of God, cured Naaman of his leprosy ; and Naaman was converted, and asked the prophet would God pardon him if he bowed down before the heathen god Rimmon, when he went with his master into the house of Rimmon ; and Elisha told him to 'go in peace.' So I shall do all they tell me, but in my heart look to Jesus alone for salvation, and His blessed book as my only guide."

"But, Ellen, do not let your manner change towards Amelia ; treat her civilly, but be cautious ; and we must not appear to be great friends either, below stairs ; but I shall often come in here at night, to talk with you."

"And you will take me with you if you go, Agatha dear ?"

"I hope so, love ; at least, bring you to your mamma." And kissing her again, the nun went away.

CHAPTER IV.

ELLEN, as she had promised, endeavoured to comply with all the regulations of the establishment, and succeeded, after some time, in gaining the notice and approbation of the Reverend Mother. Without actually quarrelling with Amelia Simpson, she avoided her, and chose the little girl nearly her own age as companion in her walks and plays. Sister Agatha was dignified and reserved in the school-room, but came frequently at night, when the house was quiet, to talk to her about their escape, and ask Ellen to tell her stories from the Bible; which the child did in her own earnest language, proud and happy at being asked to do so by one so much her senior, and a Roman Catholic.

One night her friend told her that she had quite recovered her former place in the estimation of the Reverend Mother; that she had that day been complimented by her on Ellen's improved deportment, which was attributed to her teaching and influence.

"All this is very well, Ellen dear," she continued; "we shall not be suspected or watched, as I told you; but one thing has struck me, which I did not think of before—what shall we do for money in case we leave? I cannot

write for any, because my letters are read as well as yours ; and even if I could, I do not know the present address of those who should be my friends."

"I have half-a-crown and a fourpenny-piece in the pocket of my needle-book," replied Ellen, eagerly.

"That is very little indeed, to reach London with," said the nun, kissing her.

"The cross I see you wearing ought to be worth something, if it is gold," rejoined Ellen.

"Ah ! I never thought of that. Child as you are, you know more of the world's barterings than I, so much older. Yet I should not like to part with my cross and rosary," answered her companion.

"But if it's necessary," urged Ellen ; "you know you have the love of Christ in your heart, and you do not want either cross or crucifix to remember that He died for you ; and you will pray from your heart to God, through Him, and so you do not require a rosary to help you in your prayers, as if you were a young child, or very stupid ; and our Saviour himself says—and when I hear of people saying so many Aves and Paters, in Latin too, I cannot help thinking of His words—' Use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do.'

"In what part of the Bible is that, Ellen, love ?"

"In the sixth of Matthew, I think ; then afterwards He adds—' When ye pray, say, Our Father, which art in heaven ; ' but He does not tell us to say it a great many times."

"And how much do you think the crucifix and rosary are worth, Ellen ?"

"Oh ! I don't know ; I only used to hear girls at Mrs. Villiers' talk of brooches they bought, and what the jeweller allowed for those they wished to exchange."

"It is a good thought, at all events ; and Ellen," she

continued, after a pause, "I shall leave one of your own frocks here to-morrow, which you can wear under the school dress—for it, you know, is a little large; and as seven of the scholars are going home for the holidays at the end of the week, it is hard to say what opportunity we might have of passing the gate-woman."

"And are the girls going away?" cried Ellen; "Rosa never told me of it."

"Because they were all especially charged not to do so, lest you might fret, and wish also to go. See how obedient they have been. Now, good-night;" and Ellen was left to finish her sleep.

The vacation commenced, and the young ladies had gone to their respective homes, but no way of escape presented itself. One by one they went away, without hurry or bustle, got into a cab at the outer gate, and were left by the gardener at the railway station or coach, as the case might be. Ellen, however, living in hope, showed no sign of disappointment, and the Reverend Mother smiled on her in approbation.

One of the servants at the nunnery had been a Protestant, but was induced to become a Romanist by the nuns. A cousin and sister came occasionally to see her, but generally went no further than the gate-lodge. This vacation, Sister Ursula, who had so much success with their relative, thought she would like also to instruct them, and desired Sarah to bring them to the school-room when they next came. The girl did so, and, as she had seen the scholars do, made them leave their bonnets and cloaks in the hall.

Sister Agatha and Ellen had been walking in the garden, bemoaning their hard lot, and talking of various plans; Ellen even suggested their climbing over the garden wall, or wading through the ditch at the other end.

"Ah, no, Ellen," replied the nun, smiling; "we must walk quietly out by the large gate, or not at all; and that I fear we shall never do. Let us go in, the sun is getting very hot; and the Reverend Mother and two sisters are in the summer-house, reading, so we can't go there."

As they passed through the hall, Ellen pointed to the strange garments: "Ah! Sister Agatha, whose are they?"

"I really do not know," replied the nun, looking at them curiously. "Ha!" she went on to herself, "it might do. Ellen, love," she continued, hurriedly, "go to your room, and wait there till I come—run."

Ellen did so, and waited impatiently. Suddenly the door opened, and Sister Agatha, with a bundle in her hand, entered.

"Give me your two-and-tenpence, Ellen," she said. "Now, tie up this bundle of things. That will do. Come quickly after me; don't make any noise, and don't speak."

Ellen followed her to the hall. Sister Agatha there put one of the common bonnets and coarse cloaks on Ellen: and arraying herself quickly in the other, laid the two-and-tenpence on the hall-table, and then taking Ellen's hand, opened the house-door noiselessly and went out. The gate-woman was knitting at her door, and as they approached, stood up of her own accord to open the postern.

"Well, I hope you liked good Sister Ursula?" she remarked, as they came up.

"Yes, very much," replied Agatha, in a feigned voice, hurrying out.

There were the green fields again—there was the wide, dusty road—there was the free, free air, and liberty; and the sun's bright rays were clearer, and the blue of God's

sky more beautiful, and the carol of the little birds more cheering outside than within the prison walls. The long-held breath had vent, the palpitating hearts beat more regularly—they were free. Not too fast, it might rouse suspicion—now at the bend of the road—on, on. We are safe, thank God—on, on.

“Turn down here to that hollow, Ellen; we must put off our convent dresses. There is a clump of trees which will hide us nicely.”

And Ellen’s school-dress was taken off, her own neat frock appearing underneath; and Sister Agatha doffed her grey serge and close-fitting cap; then opening the bundle she carried, displayed Ellen’s second frock, enlarged and lengthened.

“How did you manage it so nicely?” asked Ellen, as she helped her to fasten it.

“I found another in the store-room, which belonged to Rosa, and made a patchwork thing—you see it is joined—but does very well; and I’ve a little cap too. Now hand me the bonnet, and hold the cloak. We make very smart farmers’ girls, don’t we, Ellen?”

“Yes, indeed,” cried Ellen, in great delight; “but what shall we do now?”

“Tie up those dresses we don’t want, and leave them under this bush. It won’t do, however, for us to remain here, Ellen, and our flight will not be long undiscovered. As well as I recollect, there are cross-roads about a mile from this; and we could see there the boards to tell us how far from L——, where we must go first; we cannot be much more than eight miles from it.”

“But why go there?” asked Ellen.

“Because it is the nearest large town, and I must sell the crucifix before we can travel.”

“You will sell it then?” said Ellen with a smile.

"Yes," replied Agatha, gently; "I have it here instead," and she touched her heart. "But come, Ellen, we must hurry on, and fast too."

They regained the high-road, and pressed forward, reaching the cross-roads about as soon as the nun anticipated.

"Seven-and-a-half miles to L——," she read from the board, "and three-and-a-half to D——. This is our road to the right. It will effectually mislead any who may follow us. Will you give me your needle-book, Ellen?"

"Yes, dear Agatha," she answered, taking it from her pocket.

"Do you value it much?"

"Yes, rather; it was Louisa Orr gave it me at Mrs. Villiers', and you see worked my name in it."

"That is the very reason I want it. May I leave it on the other road, to make them think we went that way?"

"Oh! to be sure."

And Agatha ran about twenty yards of the road opposite, not that to L——, and dropped the book, then quickly returned.

"Now on," she said, and they set off toward D——.

"How clever you are!" exclaimed Ellen, admiringly; "I should never have thought of that."

"I rejoice to hear it, love; the mind that of its own accord thinks of craft, and plans deceit, cannot be good or pure. I, alas! come from a school where artifice and lying were praised as virtues. Now I put in practice one of the many lessons I have heard, justifiable, certainly, in this case; but, without doubt, double-dealing, in all its variations, springs from the father of lies."

"With God is no variableness, neither shadow of turning,'" quoted Ellen, as she trotted on.

"Where is that from?" asked her companion.

"The Bible—always the Bible," replied Ellen, smiling.

"Well, Ellen, dear, you know a great deal about God, and I know pretty accurately what the devil is; you can tell me what to look for, and why, and I can teach you what to shun; so, between both, we ought to be very good."



CHAPTER V.

N they went towards D——. They there found a by-road leading to L——, and arrived in this latter place towards evening, tired and hungry.

"We must sell the crucifix now, and get something to eat," said Agatha, cheerfully; "we shall sleep here to-night. Ah! there's a jeweller's shop: we'll try him." And entering, she showed her only treasure to the man behind the counter, inquiring in a shy, awkward manner, "Would he buy it?"

He looked suspiciously at the two girls, flushed, tired-looking, and dust-covered. "Where did you get this?" he demanded, as he looked at the workmanship and rosary beads.

"I got it—I got it. I don't think it necessary to say where I got it," replied Agatha, taken aback by his impudent question, but recovering herself.

"Humph! what do you want for it?"

"I do not know the value; perhaps you would be so kind as to say what you think it worth?"

"Quite impossible to say, unless I weighed it, and I must send for scales. Here John," and he called an assistant, and whispering to him, sent him out.

While waiting, he tormented the girls with various rude questions, as, "Where they came from? where they were going? what were their names?", until at last Agatha, out of all patience in trying to evade his inquiries, stretched out her hand for the crucifix, saying—

"Give me that, sir, I shall not sell it now."

"Oh! but, my pretty damsels, you must allow me to weigh it," he replied, holding it back; you know you have given me the trouble of sending for scales—and here they are—the scales of Justice, too, and that's the best." And his assistant entered, followed by a policeman.

"Mr. Constable," he continued, "these two lassies have been offering this ornament and chain for sale, and can give no account of themselves, nor don't know the value of it, so I thought it well to send for you."

"Stolen goods!" said the constable, knowingly—"look like it—trampers from the country—green uns, too, I guess. Give me the article, Mr. Withers. Come now, girls, walk on first, quietly, mind."

Agatha and Ellen were petrified as he began to speak. The policeman's touch on her shoulder aroused the former. She started back and, with flashing eye, exclaimed—

"That crucifix is my property, detain it at your peril; my name is"—and she paused, glancing at Ellen.

"Well, and what is your name?" sneeringly asked the constable. Ellen was beginning to whimper, greatly terrified.

"Bring us before a magistrate and I will tell," resumed Agatha, more calmly.

"To-morrow morning I will, dear, with great pleasure; but you must go to quod for to-night."

"Here's a go!" cried a little boy at the door. And

Agatha, seeing a crowd beginning to collect, comforting Ellen, prepared to go with the policeman.

A gentleman and lady, riding by in the cool of the summer evening, pulled up their horses as the two girls stepped out to the street again.

"What a lovely little girl, Edward," exclaimed the latter, pointing to Ellen; "is it possible that she is arrested?"

Ellen saw the sympathising look and noticing hand, and sprang forward, her cloak falling off in the crowd, and her bonnet streaming behind her, left her at the lady's stirrup, with white, upraised hand, silken ringlets, and well-made dress, indeed a child of gentle blood.

"Dear Madam," she cried, "save her—save her! The crucifix is her own, indeed, indeed! We have both just escaped from a horrible convent; she is a nun, and my name is Ellen Seaton, grand-daughter of Lord ____."

"My poor child!" replied the lady, jumping from her horse, "what is all this?"

But the crowd had heard something of an "escaped nun," and the true hearts of merry England had little sympathy with bondage or tyranny in any shape; and Sister Agatha was placed by them beside Ellen and the lady. The gentleman had now dismounted, and joined the group.

"The owner of that face can never have done wrong," he said, looking at Agatha: "and from the likeness to a dear friend of mine, I should say, with a name equally incapable of dishonour—a De Vere, if I might presume to guess?"

"That is my name," answered Agatha, surprised.

"Your twin-brother's name was Robert?"

"Yes."

"And the heiress of Deerhurst is so clad, and under arrest—it is too absurd!"

"Heiress!" said Agatha; "I don't understand you, sir."

"Why, your brother died in India a year and a-half ago; your uncle also died suddenly, soon after, intestate. I know the property was not entailed, and I rather fancy you are the heiress-at-law."

Agatha was overwhelmed.

"Constable," continued the gentleman, "I will be accountable for your prisoners—call a fly."

"Certainly, Sir Edward, by all means; you had better keep the ornament."

A fly soon appeared, the ladies got into it, Sir Edward took charge of the horses, and led the way.

Sister Agatha was indeed the owner of large estates, in the possession of her guardian and cousin, next heir, failing herself. Sir Edward Stanley, a young baronet, residing with his mother and two sisters, brought the matter under the Chancellor's notice, and she was soon restored to her rights.

Ellen remained under her care, called by her name, observing great seclusion, lest her parents might learn her abode, and force her to some Romanist school again. In two years, however, she perceived by the papers that, her father having returned to England, had also returned to the church he had left.

Miss De Vere, now herself a Protestant, having ascertained the truth of the report, put herself in communication with him; and the parent was again united to the child, and taught her again to look to the Bible, and the Bible alone, for the knowledge of salvation and religious truths; but they could never discover where her mother was.

Sister Agatha, on attaining her one-and-twentieth year, became the wife of Sir Edward Stanley, and often talked over "the shame of the cross," so curiously exemplified in her when they first met; but never forgot the sweet child who, in simple language from God's own holy Book, taught her the truth as it is in Jesus, and showed her how she should really "take up her cross and follow Him."







